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The Editors on where the Democrats go from here
Charles Krauthammer on the end of the campaign

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CORRESPONDENCE

AMAZIN' KAZIN

To the editors:

"Mencken is not what right-wingers now riding high think he was," Alfred Kazin declares in his article "Mencken's Ghost" (TNR, October 22). Whatever this statement may mean, Mencken was not what Mr. Kazin thinks he was. The greatest influence upon Mencken, from his youth onward, was William Graham Sumner, one of the most hard-headed and uncompromising of Social Darwinists. It was this strain in Mencken's thought, and not his supposed sensitivity to "political and economic frustration," that made him so appreciative of Theodore Dreiser, whose worldview so closely resembled his own.

WILFRED M. MCCLAY
Severna Park, Maryland

Mr. Kazin replies:

Yes, William Graham Sumner was an intellectual influence on Mencken. So were Thomas Henry Huxley, Nietzsche, Shaw, and many others. His favorite book was *Huckleberry Finn*. In any event, Sumner, the arch-apostle of laissez-faire and as little government as possible, has nothing in common with the right-wing interventionists in every side of private life who are now running us. If Mr. McClay thinks that Mencken's favorite, Theodore Dreiser, lacked sensitivity to political and economic frustration, I advise him to read *An American Tragedy*.

FERRARO FEVER

To the editors:

In his piece on Geraldine Ferraro ("Rookie Of The Year," TNR, November 5), Morton Kondracke's points concerning Ms. Ferraro's likely reactions to Soviet moves, Central America, or the need to use U.S. force belie his later argument that "if she actually understood the grim reality of how Marxist-Leninist males behave in this world," she would become a realist. Geraldine Ferraro is not 10 years old. She is, as Mr. Kondracke states, "very smart," and must be presumed to have oriented herself in world affairs and chosen her position. In endorsing the Mondale-Ferraro ticket, TNR expressed serious concern about the foreign policy views dominant in the Democratic Party. Mr. Kondracke has also stated that he thinks those views, which are shared by Ms. Ferraro, are incompatible with the national interests of the United States. So why appeal from Ms. Ferraro ignorant to a wholly hypothetical Ms. Ferraro informed? She should be expected to know what she is saying. It is precisely because I take her seriously that I opposed the Mondale-Ferraro ticket.

DAVID GRESS
Stanford, California

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's analogy between the first female vice-presidential candidate and Jackie Robinson, the first black man to break major league baseball's color barrier, is seriously flawed. Whereas racial prejudice prevented Mr. Robinson from entering the big leagues for many years after his talent qualified him, Representative Ferraro's ascent to the political big time was obviously hastened due to her gender. Further, unlike Walter Mondale, whose questionable selection of Ms. Ferraro was born of political desperation, Branch Rickey—Jackie Robinson's principal benefactor—did what was clearly right, even though it was clearly unpopular.

JAIME HENRY BELLARD
Saint Paul, Minnesota

THE REAL JEFFERSON

To the editors:

Judith Shklar's claim that Thomas Jefferson was "hawkish" is news to students of American history ("The Renaissance American," TNR, November 5).

Just before the Presidential election of 1800, Jefferson wrote that he opposed a navy, "which, by its own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us, [will] grind us with public burthens and sink us under them." As President, he mothballed the high-seas fleet, replacing it with 180 cheap, "republican" gunboats. Gunboats were purely coast-defense craft,

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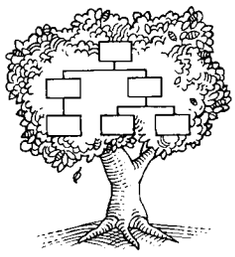
THE BEST GIN GROWS ON TREES.



The driest and most delicate gin of all, in fact, comes from the tree at the left: the family tree of James Burrough, a distiller in 19th century London.

Burrough had a basic philosophy: if you want a thing done right, do it yourself. Not a single distillation of his Beefeater Gin left his distillery till it was approved by James himself.

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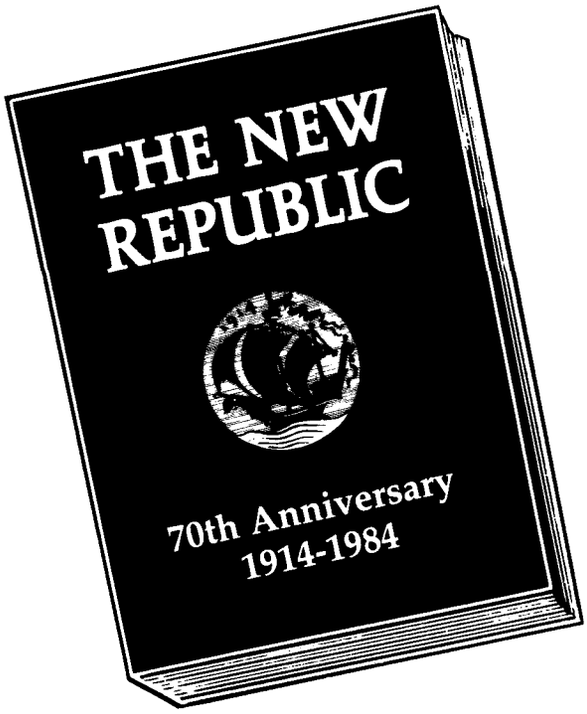

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FROM WASHINGTON

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Well, that was fun. But now: back to business. Ronald Reagan lost the election in the sense that he now has to run the country, a burden made heavier by the dishonest campaign he conducted.

Where were we, before we were interrupted by—what was it now? The Florida straw poll? The Rhode Island beauty contest? The *Silo* (North Dakota) *Agro-Subsidy-Ledger* candidates' debate? One test of a political system—a test ours fails pretty miserably—is how many of the issues that dominated a political campaign still matter to anyone the week after it's over. Should Mondale give back his PAC money? Will the networks show Reagan's eighteen-minute film? Did Bush use naughty words? And hey, what about Bert Lance?

With a heavy heart, we bid a fond adieu to these glamorous questions and turn our gaze back to the serious problem of the federal deficit. Or, more accurately, the national debt. Or, more accurately still, the practical consequence of that debt: interest. The debt has grown by more than $100 billion since the Iowa caucuses, while we were otherwise engaged. By 1989 that increase alone will be adding $16 billion a year to the federal budget, which is a couple billion dollars more than what food stamps are expected to cost in that year. What is now a serious economic problem could turn into a social one. I think we may be sowing the seeds of class war.

The nightmare we've gotten ourselves into is paying interest on interest. The deficit for this past fiscal year was $172 billion, of which $111 billion went to pay interest on past debt. The Congressional Budget Office conservatively estimates that by 1989, under current plans, the deficit will be $263 billion, of which $213 billion will be interest payments. In other words, we actually will have reduced the deficit on current government activity, from $61 billion to $50 billion. But thanks to interest payments, the actual deficit will be swollen by more than half. The national debt will have almost doubled, from $1.3 trillion now to $2.5 trillion.

It's often pointed out that both the deficit and the total national debt were higher than they are now, in relation to gross national product, throughout the postwar period. That's true. But the debt as a proportion of GNP was shrinking throughout that era, from over 60 percent in 1955 to 25 percent in 1974. At the rate we're going, it will be back up near 50 percent by the end of this decade. More important, *interest* on the debt was taking barely 1 percent of our GNP in 1955. By 1990 it will be taking four times that share.

Walter Mondale (remember him?) was technically incorrect in saying that we are borrowing from our children with this debt. Individuals can go into hock, but a society as a whole cannot borrow from the future; it can only spend what it has got. (This is a difficult point to grasp, but it's true.) Nevertheless, the growing debt is burdening America's future in at least three ways.

First, it is swallowing up money that might otherwise go into investment in the economy. The less we invest today, the less prosperous we'll be tomorrow. Second, it is increasingly being financed by borrowing from abroad. This undermines the traditional solace about the national debt that "we owe it to ourselves." The Treasury Department under Secretary Donald Regan is cravenly designing new forms of U.S. government bonds to satisfy the taste of rich foreigners for assets that can be kept secret from the tax collector. America currently borrows about $90 billion more from the rest of the world than it lends. Not all of this $90 billion goes to the government, but the part that doesn't merely replaces American capital that the government has preempted. At this rate, America soon will be the world's biggest international debtor, bigger than Argentina and Mexico. That is a debt our children *will* have to pay back.

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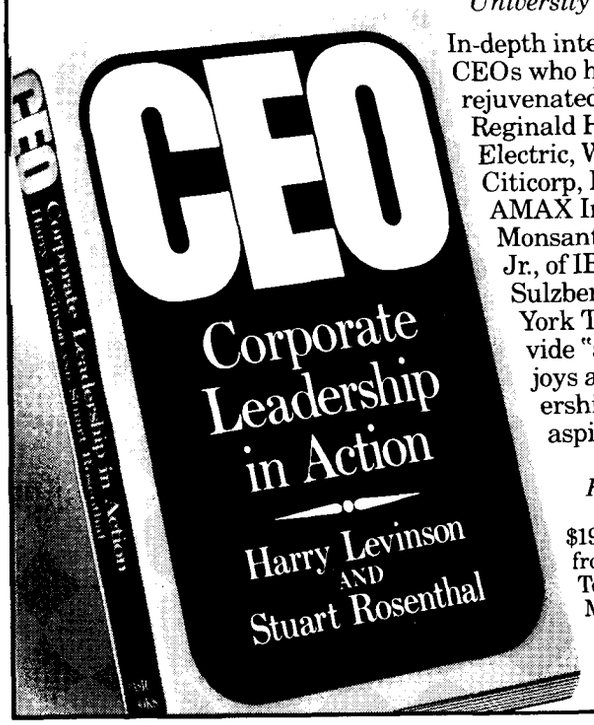

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 26, 1984

NOW WHAT?

The Democratic Party has been dealt another shattering defeat, making this the fourth Presidential loss out of the last five elections and the third out of five by landslide proportions. President Reagan carried every state except Minnesota and the District of Columbia, giving him the second biggest electoral-vote victory since the days of George Washington. His 59-41 popular-vote victory was the fifth largest in modern U.S. history. Democrats did pick up two seats in the Senate and lost "only" fourteen to seventeen seats in the House, not enough to give the President automatic control of Congress. The long-awaited realignment of American politics again seems not to have taken place, and there is every reason for Democrats to aspire to take back the Senate in 1986 and the White House in 1988. But the fact has got to be faced: at the Presidential level, the Democrats have taken a historic drubbing.

The party has three fundamental choices. It can simply write this off as a "personal victory" for Ronald Reagan and claim that no Democrat could have done much better against a popular President running on a platform of peace, patriotism, and prosperity. It can pile the blame on Walter Mondale, much as it did on George McGovern and Jimmy Carter, and once again revise its nominating procedures to produce a different kind of nominee four years from now. Or it can look into itself for the reasons for its successive defeats, and resolve to reconsider the way in which it addresses America's problems.

We think that the first two alternatives constitute paths to disaster. There's no question that Ronald Reagan is well-liked, that he has a recovery going, that he hasn't started a war, and that he has improved America's morale. We doubt that any Democrat who ran for President this year could have beaten him. It does not follow from this, however, that if the Democratic Party just waits around for the holes in Mr. Reagan's record to open up for the whole nation to see, Democrats will be triumphantly returned to power. Reaganomics surely is a fraud whose inner contradictions will make themselves manifest, probably in painful ways. A complicated international crisis—in the Philippines, say, or in Chile or Nicaragua—could gravely test Mr. Reagan's limited foreign policy sophistication. And if he supports the agenda of the social issue fanatics in his political family, he may alienate some of the young people who flocked to his cause.

Yet the Democratic Party once before bet its future on antipathy toward Reaganism, and lost. After the debacle of 1980, the party resolved to rethink and retool. Walter Mondale even said he was taking a year off to talk to people around the country and redesign his program. Two or three new Democratic think tanks were created for the purpose of developing new approaches to governmental problems. But the 1982 recession took the heat off, and the party went back to the crusty old formula of baiting Republicans on the issues of unemployment and Social Security. It should have been clear from the election results in 1982 that the formula would not work, especially if prosperity showed signs of returning. The Democrats gained twenty-six House seats when they probably should have gained forty. They picked up no Senate seats

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at all. And why? Mostly, we think, because the party had no economic alternative to offer except a massive public employment program which the electorate did not find credible.

AFTER 1982, most of those who had dedicated themselves to developing new ideas began working up position papers for the Mondale campaign instead, and the Mondale campaign became enmeshed with special interests. Senator Gary Hart and some of the so-called neoliberals talked about the need for "new ideas," but the truth is that except for Mr. Hart's own military reform proposals and the Bradley-Gephardt tax reform plan, precious few were ever put into concrete form. It could be that the second Reagan term will be so burdened with failure that Democrats will need only maintain a sturdy opposition stance, hold to their traditional principles and programs, and welcome the electorate home in 1986 and 1988. We doubt it. We think the party needs different candidates and different approaches.

This does not mean, however, that Democrats should begin their rethinking process with a ritual scapegoating of Walter Mondale. It's conceivable that another candidate would have lost less badly to Mr. Reagan than Mr. Mondale did, but there's no way to be sure. Some polls may emerge suggesting that Gary Hart would have been a stronger candidate, but we think they should be viewed with suspicion; Mr. Hart has always fared better as a ghostly figure on a pollster's list than he has in the flesh. Mr. Mondale certainly was not an ideal candidate, representing as he did an old-fashioned interest group liberalism that is no longer in fashion. He was not charismatic or particularly eloquent.

And yet, the party would be making a grave mistake to blame its loss exclusively on him. In the first place, Mr. Mondale waged a tough, solid general election campaign based on the fundamental Democratic principles—justice, community, democracy—that the party must maintain regardless of the new ways it finds to express them. Mr. Mondale is a decent man who stayed true to himself and his beliefs. By the end of the campaign, he had learned how to expound a forward-looking vision of hope and opportunity instead of relying solely on a sense of righteous indignation. He also had the imagination to give the nation its first woman Vice Presidential candidate. Mr. Mondale's pledge to raise taxes was a political gamble that he lost, but it still represented an act of courage and an expression of trust in the people's desire to be informed ahead of time about what their Presidents intend to do in office.

Although Mr. Mondale does not deserve to be reviled by his party, it's clear that the Mondale method of campaigning and governing will not attract the support of an electoral majority. And this method—including reliance on and protection of special interest groups—is deeply ingrained in the mentality of the national Democratic Party. When Mr. Mondale won the Democratic nomination this year, he was no interloper; rather, he represented the essence of what the Democratic Party has come to stand for. As speech after speech (and speaker after speaker) at the national convention demonstrated this summer, the Democratic Party thinks it cannot stand for equal rights for blacks unless it meets the specific demands of black leaders—this year, the Congressional Black Caucus and next year, perhaps, the Reverend Jesse Jackson. To be for women's equality means it must dance to the tune played by the National Organization for Women. Being for the interests of working people requires obeying the A.F.L.-C.I.O., being for education means following the N.E.A., being against discrimination against gays means adopting the affirmative action agenda of the National Gay Rights Task Force, etc., etc.

SOMEHOW, the Democratic Party must find a way to represent a national interest that transcends the mere sum of these perfectly legitimate but still comparatively narrow group interests. And it must divorce the goal of representing the aspirations of minorities, working people, women, and other groups from the tendency to obey every demand of interest group spokesmen. To be for workers, for example, ought not mean favoring protectionist trade restrictions, but rather working for freer trade in the world. To be for Hispanics may or may not mean opposing the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill; it ought not mean *automatically* opposing it. To be for education means favoring higher pay *and* competency requirements for teachers.

Of all the groups whose special interests may be at variance with those of the party as a whole, blacks may present the most difficult problem. Blacks make up the largest single bloc in the Democratic Party, more than one-quarter of the party's total national vote this year. Politically and morally, blacks have a strong claim on the party, yet a polarizing process is clearly under way in this country which could put the Democratic Party into perpetual minority status if it responds too automatically to black leadership. Over the four Presidential elections prior to 1984, Democrats averaged only 38 percent of the white vote. On Tuesday, Mondale-Ferraro got 36 percent. The Democratic Party must never sacrifice its principles for votes. It cannot stop favoring equal opportunity in order to win elections, but neither should it adopt a radical economic and foreign policy agenda because leading black Democrats may demand it. If Jesse Jackson does emerge as the nation's foremost black political spokesman, and if he continues to pursue his advocacy of deeply cutting defense to finance social programs and of aligning with Third World governments and movements that oppose democratic values, then there will be a crisis of direction in the Democratic Party. Black mayors and other black elected officials have no inherent stake in Mr. Jackson's ideological agenda; on the contrary, it tends to work against their interests, and we hope they will move to assert their political leadership of the black community. If they don't, the chances will increase that the Democratic Party will become a kind of American counterpart of the British Labour Party.

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It will probably be argued by some that the way back to power for the Democratic Party should begin with the repudiation and jettisoning of various powerful interest groups such as NOW and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and possibly the public humiliation of the so-called Washington insiders who purportedly led the party to defeat. The future, it will be said, belongs to the young and the fresh, and finding the future requires eliminating the past. One major policy focus of the emerging forces of youth in the party will be the Fairness Commission called for at the Democratic Convention to rewrite delegate selection rules yet again and make the Presidential nominating process still more "open." The youth guard especially wants to cut back on the number of so-called "superdelegates"—the members of Congress, governors, mayors, and party officials who made up 14 percent of 1984 convention delegates and voted overwhelmingly for Mr. Mondale.

There is some merit in the charge that these delegates, who were supposed to stay uncommitted and save the party from nominating a sure loser, instead threw their support early to Mr. Mondale and stuck with him even when his loss seemed certain. On the other hand, superdelegates do provide the party with a keel, preventing it from being blown by the whims of primary voters. And if it's youth and new ideas that procedural reformers are after, they should realize that a generational transition already has taken place in Congress and in the nation's statehouses.

INSTEAD OF purging anybody, the party needs to retain what it has in terms of talent and variety, while loosening the grip of special interest spokesmen. If any one group ought to be elevated in influence, it is the party's governors, who have shown a remarkable ability to win elections while national and Congressional candidates have been losing. Prior to last Tuesday's voting, Democrats controlled thirty-five of the nation's governorships. After the deluge, they will still control thirty-three. We are not saying that the party necessarily should look to a governor as its Presidential nominee in 1988; as Jimmy Carter demonstrated, one doesn't automatically acquire national governing skills in a statehouse. We are saying that the governors have been dealing creatively with some of the nation's most difficult domestic problems and balancing budgets at the same time. States such as Arizona, Massachusetts, Virginia, Texas, Arkansas, and North Carolina have dramatically upgraded education and used universities as the magnet for high-tech industrial development. As Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt observes, the governors tend to be free-market internationalists rather than protectionists and isolationists, because they are eager to have their state economies grow rather than stagnate.

Growth and change have always been major goals of the Democratic Party, but in recent years protection of the status quo has become an increasingly dominant preoccupation. Instead of inventing ways to create new jobs, the party has been trying to maintain existing jobs in out-of-date industries. It has been fighting to keep old bureaucracies alive, and it has been using quotas to dictate equality of results rather than deregulating and encouraging minorities to use the market to advance economically. It has been defending middle-class entitlement programs such as Social Security without heed to the changes that everyone agrees privately are going to have to be made. In the damning phrase of the Republican political analyst Kevin Phillips, the Democratic Party has become dedicated to "reactionary liberalism." It's little wonder that the party did so poorly among young voters. A 73-year-old man told them that the best days of America were yet to come, and the once-dynamic Democratic Party seemed to say it wasn't so. The Democrats need to find leaders who believe it is so—and can make it so in reality, not just in television ads.

The new patriotism that Ronald Reagan invoked is also something that a renewed Democratic Party would take pride in and would advance, rather than disparage and drown with guilt. The Democrats waved American flags at their convention in San Francisco, but their platform and their primary candidates said again and again that America is wrong in defending its interests abroad. Walter Mondale, to his credit, adopted a strong centrist foreign policy position in the general election campaign, saying he would have invaded Grenada as President Reagan did and might quarantine Nicaragua. But one can't blame the electorate for wondering which was the real Mondale—February's more-freezy-than-thou primary candidate advocate or the "commander in chief" of the October debates. All year long, the Democratic Party needs to talk and vote in Congress as Mr. Mondale campaigned at the end.

One of the early fights to come will be over the Democratic Party chairmanship. The field again is filled with party mechanics, fund-raisers, and former state chairs. What the party needs instead is a spokesperson who is interested in what the party stands for, who knows a good idea when he or she hears one, and who can encourage development of new approaches to the nation's problems. The job of rebuilding the Democratic Party is so large that it requires somebody of Presidential caliber to take it on.

NOTEBOOK

□ ONE OF THE biggest pleasures so far of celebrating the seventieth anniversary of THE NEW REPUBLIC was hearing from Clarence Barnhart of Bronxville, New York. In the course of ordering several TNR diaries, Mr. Barnhart informed us that he has subscribed to the magazine since 1917—a good twenty-two years before the oldest member of the current TNR staff was born. We consider such loyalty to be both a trust and an honor, and we salute Mr. Barnhart. Now we're wondering if there are any other loyal subscribers whose membership in the TNR family dates that far back. If you've been reading TNR since 1917 or

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before, we want to hear from you. Our birthday party won't be complete without you.

□ WE'RE NOT SO COMPETITIVE with sister publications that we refrain from tipping readers off when something especially important is published elsewhere. This week we think two pieces, in two different magazines, particularly worthy of attention. The first one is in the November *Encounter*, and we're glad we hadn't seen it last week lest we would have recommended it then and further reduced the number of Mondale votes in the country. "Disastrous Years: When U.S. Foreign Policy Fumbled and Stumbled," by Elie Kedourie, is a relentless portrait of the diplomatic credulity and naïveté of the Carter Administration. The second one appears in the November 22 issue of *The New York Review of Books*. It is an interview, reprinted from *Der Spiegel*, with Mustafa Tlas, the Syrian minister of defense, who is so Hitlerian in his views and his ways of expressing them that one hopes the self-effacing and self-defeating faith in the force of concessions made to madmen and mad regimes (which Mr. Kedourie's essay evokes) would not be invested in the madmen and mad regime in Damascus. But then one can't be sure about the limits of credulity in the State Department, even Ronald Reagan's State Department—a good reason for hoping these two pieces will be read there, too.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "With only four states left, with less than a third of the members of Congress, with no leader who captures popular imagination or is likely to do so, and with no coherent program, the Republican Party seems to be on its way to the cemetery. It is quite possible that the Great Depression of the thirties, coming after and during its unchallenged control of national affairs, will be so long associated with Republicanism that it cannot win power again for a generation. And that probably means never, for a party so long deprived of the emoluments of office in both nation and states will die for lack of mere nutrition." ("If The Elephant Dies," The Editors, November 21, 1934.)

Punching bags of the left and right.

IDEO GAMES

AS HECKLERS were escorted out of both sides of the Portland University auditorium during President Reagan's speech there on October 23, the President declared, "There's a perfect example of where we solid citizens are—caught between the right and the left." With that, Reagan proudly (if implausibly) joined the broadest tradition in American political rhetoric, the denunciation of ideologues of the left and right. Richard Holbrooke and Harry McPherson gave the classic expression of this trope in an April 1983 *New York Times Magazine* article when they complained of the "successive teams of ideologues" who have jerked American foreign policy "from far left to far right." Senator Paul Tsongas employed a common variation in 1982 when he announced that "certain realities . . . will prevail over dogma whether of the conservative or liberal variety." The hardy tradition goes back at least to 1949, when Arthur Schlesinger Jr. reported in his book *The Vital Center* that moderate liberalism "has been and will continue to be under attack from the far right and far left."

THE APPEAL of abusing the ideologues of the left and right (let's call them ILARS, for short) is that it allows you to present yourself as a straight-talking, pragmatic realist of the respectable—yet curiously besieged—center of American politics. In the face of the supposedly implacable onslaught of dogmatists, rhetoricians, extremists, and the like, the ILAR war cry aims to rouse mobs of flaming moderates from their beds and rally them to the only just cause remaining—yours.

Somehow we remain drowsy. ILARs just don't inflame the adrenal cortex the way they once did. When Schlesinger shouted "ILAR" thirty-five years ago, people jumped: *The Vital Center* made the best-seller list. But if Reagan is a solid citizen of the center, who isn't?

Today's anti-ILAR enthusiasts range from, well, the far right to the far left. Reagan's rhetorical company, for example, includes my moderate colleague Leon Wieseltier, who noted that his essay, "Nuclear War, Nuclear Peace," was "shouted down from all of the right and almost all of the left." Liberal James Fallows praised Wieseltier's book by echoing it (with less nuance): "Ideologues of the left and right will find much to irritate them here." But one such ideologue of the left, Richard Barnet writing in *The New York Times Book Review* in May, agreed that "so much of the familiar debate between the right and left is beside the point." Will the real ILAR baiter please stand up?

Some ideologues, of course, deserve denunciation. But surely much of this ILAR baiting is just the usual clucking from the chicken coop of moderation or the imitation clucking of foxy ILARs up to their mischief. The only way to distinguish the centrist hens from the ideological marauders is to listen carefully to the varieties of ILAR rhetoric. At least four common uses (or misuses) of the ILAR cliché are worth noting.

The Allure of the Insipid. This is perhaps the most common ILAR abuse. Denouncing ILARs becomes a refuge from the perils of thinking. In striving to resist the dogma of left and right, it becomes all too easy to swoon for vapidity. Senator Tsongas, for example, was an early fan of John Glenn's Presidential campaign. Barbara Crossette, a reporter for *The New York Times*, abdicated from the duty to think last April when reviewing *Violent Neighbors*, a book about Central America by journalist Tom Buckley. In good ILAR style, she wrote, "Neither the left nor the

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right will find it satisfactory." Trouble is, nor will anyone else; it's an amiably irrelevant book. The master chef of this kind of intellectual cream of wheat is Theodore Sorenson. His book *A Different Kind of Presidency* ("myriad special interest groups on the left and the right . . .") will warm the tummies of all those who dread facing the ILAR bullies each morning.

THE Vulgarity of Commitment. This ILAR maneuver allows ideologues to believe their ideology is no such thing. These ILAR abusers are smart enough to recognize the usefulness of ideology and smart enough not to admit it. Tom Farer urbanely swatted pesky ILARs in the Fall 1983 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine: "The U.S. conservative impulse is radical and its judgment twisted by an ideology no less distempered than that of the far left," he said. But the point of Farer's whole article was that the left's support for revolution in Central America is justified. It's just not polite to say so openly.

The primness of this kind of ILAR baiting makes it rather easy to see through. In its Spring 1984 issue, the *Wilson Quarterly*, a journal put out by the Smithsonian, introduced several articles on civil rights with the note that they cut through "the rhetoric of Left and Right." But one piece was written by an avowed Democratic Socialist, another by a high-ranking official in the Reagan Justice Department. Both are known for employing the language of their ideologies. Indeed, the Administration official's job is to translate ideology into reality as smoothly as possible. So if either author had worthwhile insights about civil rights, it was because of, not despite, the rhetoric of the left and right.

The Fallacy of the Relative Center. This is a trickier kind of ILAR abuse. It employs the handy ILAR dichotomy to distance oneself from unseemly allies without disowning them. While you claim the moderate high ground, you still permit your favorite extremists to do the dirty work in the trenches. Reagan relied on this pose in Portland. But Suzanne Garment, a columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*, provided a far more subtle and skillful version of this fallacy last April when she praised the South African government's tinkerings with apartheid. Garment noted that black activists and the most fervent white racists in South Africa both oppose Western economic development under apartheid. "Once again," she sighed, "the far left and the far right conspire against the matter of factness of modern political life."

The purpose of ILAR bashing here is clear: to dispel the queasiness produced by supporting a racist, totalitarian government. In general, the trick is to pair the troglodytes with all who propose measures to control them. This consigns leftists and all but the most docile centrists, as well as the unruly (but useful) cavemen, to the ILAR darkness. Presto, you're a decent, troubled moderate just like you were in the 1960s.

There's an easy way to test Garment's fallacy: Would she like to live in the conditions tolerated by the relative center she lauds? I propose extending the benefits of modern political life—as experienced by most South Africans—to the *Journal*'s editorial offices. The matter of factness of modern political life would then require that Ms. Garment live in an all-black neighborhood, work wherever the government ordered her to, and sleep only with black men. Ideologues left and right, of course, will object. But that only confirms the reasonableness of the proposal.

The Vanity of the Fresh Look permits a pleasant measure of self-deception among defensive liberals and recent graduates of Ivy League universities. They arrive in Washington and are immediately appalled by all the people who are botching the job of running the government. "It's time," they mutter, "to take a fresh look" or, as neoliberal Nicholas Lemann put it in the July issue of the *Atlantic*, to rise above "the strictures of liberalism and conservatism." Gary Hart won the votes of these newcomers by the dozens with his variation on the ILAR theme: "This isn't a time to be liberal or a conservative. It's a time to rethink."

This is not only vain, it is often in vain. It is vain to assume that you are so brilliant that you can study some controversy that has dogged the country's best minds for decades and come up with an utterly original solution over a three-day weekend. And, in any case, the new solution has a tendency to come to naught. The brave new insight (regardless of the particular policy dispute) can usually be summarized with a slogan like, "Less isn't better, and more isn't better. Better is better." So bipartisan squads of bureaucrats are dispatched to price spare parts for cruise missiles or to simplify the tax forms or to prosecute welfare cheaters. The Yuppie politicos snap their briefcases shut and prepare for Miller Time.

It never quite arrives. Some spoilsport invariably clears his throat and asks, "Now that we've got this better thing, do we want more or less of it?" And, doggone it, it's still an important question, even more important than the challenge of buying an Allen wrench for less than $9,000. So the ideologues start debating again, and the fresh look isn't much help in deciding who's right.

THE BEST WAY to avoid the ILAR clichés is probably to assume that not all ideologues left and right are closet d'Aubuissons and Pol Pots: that they might have something to teach each other, not that they are both packs of thugs or traitors. This requires admitting, if only in the privacy of your own home, that ideology can be a useful tool in understanding the world. Ideology, after all, provides you with a consistent set of ideas and moral convictions about how the world works and ought to work. Over time you might even notice that one ideology is more accurate and appealing than another. Of course, if you say this publicly you leave yourself vulnerable to an anti-ILAR first strike from some ideologue of the center. But now you know the rules: Fight back.

JEFFERSON MORLEY

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CROSSCURRENTS

T.G.I. WEDNESDAY

WAS THIS REALLY the worst Presidential campaign ever? Or, as Meg Greenfield put it to me, are they all the worst ever? After a year of incessant campaigning, endless speechifying, and bumper-to-bumper ads, one is permitted to wonder: What was it all about? What was at stake? Was there a single issue that will be remembered beyond November 6?

What was most remarkable is that not a single issue lasted *until* November 6. The big issue in the Democratic primaries was the freeze. It was so big that the debate was not over whether it was a good idea—only Reuben Askew asked that, and you know how long he lasted—but over who was for it first. By October the freeze had vanished. When journalists brought it up in the second Reagan-Mondale debate, Mr. Mondale's theme was "verification," the classic anti-freeze code word. The other big issue was the deficit. Mr. Mondale made a brave attempt to address it by proposing a serious, detailed, and responsible tax increase. Unfortunately, debt and taxes, inevitable though they may be, make dour campaign talk. By October the only people talking about the Mondale tax plan were the Republicans.

So much for the big issues. The smaller ones were born and buried within days. Religion-in-politics, perhaps the hardiest of this set, lasted a full two weeks. Then it died of complication, literally. Mario Cuomo's nuanced Notre Dame speech (and responses by Henry Hyde and Cardinal Bernadin) marked the end of the issue as a blunt partisan instrument. No campaign issue can withstand such sustained seriousness. All sides—not extremist demonstrators, to be sure, but the national figures—discreetly drew back and let the church-state debate fade away.

Other issues barely drew a breath. As the campaign reached its climax, the typical half-life could be measured in hours. Star Wars sputtered for a day or two after Kansas City before vanishing from the radar screen. Mr. Reagan's Kennedy-as-Marx-and-Hitler letter provided a few hours of entertainment. Armageddon lasted an afternoon.

Perhaps you will protest that Presidential campaigns are not about issues at all, that they are writ on a larger canvas, that they are about ideas and vision. Well, the only Presidential candidate to hold out a clear (and radical) vision of America was Jesse Jackson. He was also the only one not running for President. Among the real candidates, vision was not the only scarce commodity. Not an idea was at stake. John Glenn stood for R&D, and lasted three weeks. Gary Hart's New Ideas dissolved in the face of a hamburger advertising slogan. Walter Mondale originally intended to run on ideas—the ideas, in the words of his opening campaign speech in January, of "a more competitive economy, a more just society, and a safer world." But at every fork in the road he followed his polls, not his muse, and so came to stand for . . . what? In the primaries, for competence. Remember the red phone commercial? But that is not an idea. Early in the general election campaign, for fairness. But he was persuaded that he could not win by asking people to vote other people's pocketbooks. He tried peace, but not for long. In Kansas City, the most important foreign policy appearance of his lifetime, his drumbeat was "strength"—he used the word thirty-nine times. He used "peace" twice. He had apparently decided to run toward the center. But as what? As a Reagan who will stay awake at cabinet meetings? It was an echo, not a choice, and the echo rang hollow.

By the end, Mr. Mondale had abandoned completely the idea of ideas—that is, of a coherent ideological challenge—and tried one last desperate issue: Reagan. Each of Mr. Reagan's victims, from Pat Brown to Jimmy Carter, had tried that. Each had succumbed to the fatal belief that his own instinctive disdain for Mr. Reagan was transferable to the electorate. This time around the tactic went under the name of the age issue, though Mr. Mondale, champion of the aged, was required to call it by different names—knowledge, mastery, command of the facts. When Mr. Reagan managed not to fall off the stage in Kansas City, the last recorded attempt to run against Reagan-the-person was over. The issue was gone, and with it the election.

After Kansas City, when it was clear to all—and to Mr. Mondale especially—that the President had won, Mr. Mondale returned to his industrial electoral base and his political roots, and found his voice again. He spoke in the dying days of the campaign of community, compassion, caring—the politics of Hubert Humphrey and Democratic liberalism. He rediscovered the idea of his candidacy. But by then he was not so much articulating a campaign theme as delivering his political testament.

FROM THE POINT of view of issues and ideas, there is less to criticize in the Republican campaign: there were none. Thinking about the issues was not a priority this time. For good reason. It might have disturbed the good feeling. Mr. Reagan ran one of the great noncampaigns in history, as devoid of substance as Richard Nixon's in 1972. Except that Mr. Nixon, who refused to acknowledge the very existence of his opponent, campaigned by way of historic deed: détente, China, SALT I. Mr. Reagan chose to run on feeling alone: optimism, Olympics, and the flag. A tempting option for a leader whose country is at peace and whose economy conveniently peaks as Election Day approaches. (Mr. Carter had his prosperity and peace in 1978; in 1980 he had recession and the Ayatollah.) Yet Mr. Reagan may have to pay for his happy-talk campaign. By not permitting a single idea to penetrate the good feeling, Mr. Reagan may have forfeited his claim to a mandate. His 1980 campaign was built on ideas; in 1981 that victory legitimated his program. That won't be the case in 1985.

But that is Mr. Reagan's loss. Our loss is different. Elections have many functions. One is metaphysical: to give

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periodic life to the popular will, allowing it to reshape the institutions of democracy. Another is psychological: to humble the mighty, to force the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to shake a hundred hands at a factory gate—and pretend to like it. On these two counts 1984 has served us well. But there is a third function, if not didactic, then at least educative: to give some sense of the nation's possibilities and to force people to examine them. The exercise of critical political reason has not been a hallmark of this campaign.

But is it the hallmark of any? One has the right to be weary on the first Wednesday of November, but is this one really worse than the others? In 1972 the popular incumbent also disdainfully ignored his challenger and the press. (David Broder wrote: "How does the press justify itself this year if the man who is likely to remain President is allowed to go through the whole campaign without answering questions on his plans for taxes . . . and a dozen other topics?") In 1968 the press protested, futilely, Nixon's near-total isolation, now known as the cocoon effect. In 1964, which we tend to remember as illuminating the firmament with the sparks of ideological combat, the primary campaign between Goldwater and Rockefeller was described by James Reston as "remarkable in at least one respect. It lasted for three months without coming to grips with a single major national issue or producing a single memorable speech." The burning issues of 1960 were the missile gap (a fiction) and Quemoy and Matsu (a fantasy), beside which the Star Wars debate appears serious and substantial.

In 1956 Stevenson derided "this mealy-mouthed Republican campaign talk, this squeaky chorus—peace, prosperity, and progress." Eisenhower argued, as it were, "We see a glow of happiness on people's faces." And Walter Lippmann found the campaign "clean and decent, but not enlightening or interesting. . . . The President refused to be provoked into debating anything." Campaigns for the reelection of a popular, successful incumbent are almost inherently sterile.

AND YET this year seems worse than most, for two reasons. One is length. It is particularly ironic that the permanent campaign should now be an American institution. Americans, who practically invented the idea of limited government, have always been circumspect about politics. They practice political minimalism: politics is viewed, warily, as a part, not the stuff, of life. The permanent campaign breaks down that wall of separation. It makes the political ever-present, inescapable. In the American context, that amounts to a Cultural Revolution. It is un-American; worse, it is annoying. Like football, also suffering from overexposure, politics has lost its seasons. The fans are groaning. If a campaign is going to be unenlightening, it should at least be short, like Canadian or British elections, which can be called, fought, and finished in three weeks.

Second, politics has been sterilized, like much of industrial life, by technology. Some of the effects are obvious. Scientific polling has become so sophisticated that candidates can be mass-produced to fit the mold, any mold. Television has become so powerful that it can set up hermetically sealed, reverberating loops (feedback, the psychologists call it) of perception with only the most tenuous relation to reality. (The night of the first Presidential debate, the polls had Mr. Mondale winning by 11 points. By Wednesday, the gap was 66 to 17. The difference is not attributable to voters' close examination of debate transcripts in the intervening days.)

But media politics has a more subtle effect. The media are accused of turning the campaign into a horse race. True, but the offense is not, as is usually charged, trivializing a lofty enterprise. The problem with horse race coverage is that it turns politics into narrative. And when politics becomes narrative, its expository, declarative, analytic core—its ideas, for example—is lost, reduced to story elements. The Theodore White tale that used to come out a year after the election is now broadcast nightly as a continuing saga, complete with cliff-hangers and teasers. After Monday night football, Tuesday night at the primaries. And when the only story is the story, and the ending is known in advance, as it has been for much of 1984, the entire exercise loses its point, and its interest.

This is not to devalue elections. Elections define democracy, and democracy remains not only an agreeable form of anarchy, as Plato observed, but, uniquely among political arrangements, the engine of both freedom and material well-being. There is something majestic about Election Day when individual citizens march with equal dignity and power to the ballot box to allocate supreme authority in their society. The election retains its beauty. It's the campaign that needs work.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

The sabotage of the 1984 Civil Rights Act.

DOWN THE HATCH

WHEN THE NEW Senate convenes in January, one of its first orders of business will be to resurrect the 1984 Civil Rights Act, which died in the final days of the 98th Congress. On October 2, after months of back-room haggling and furious tactical maneuvering by both sponsors and opponents of the bill, Senator Ted Kennedy had beseeched his colleagues one last time: "Make no mistake about it, if we table this civil rights amendment . . . we are saying, 'We will tuck discrimination under the mattress. . . .' " But he knew he had finally lost. "Shame on this body!" he thundered. "Shame on this body!"

Six months earlier, when the bill was first introduced, few would have predicted that this would be the outcome.

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The act seemed destined to easily win Congressional approval. It sought to reverse the Supreme Court's controversial decision in the *Grove City College* v. *Bell* case last February, which substantially limited the federal government's power to enforce anti-sex discrimination laws in the nation's educational institutions, and, potentially, its ability to penalize discrimination throughout the country. In June the House passed the bill by a vote of 375 to 32. Sixty-three Senate co-sponsors, led by Kennedy and Bob Packwood, Republican of Oregon, gave the legislation strong bipartisan support. But Orrin Hatch, the conservative Senator from Utah, became a one-man wrecking squad, blocking the bill's progress through his Labor and Human Resources Committee and then using procedural tactics to finish it off on the Senate floor.

IN THE *Grove City* case, the Court ruled that federal anti-discrimination laws in educational institutions applied only to the specific program or department receiving federal funds. If, for example, a university's athletic department was found to discriminate against women but did not receive federal funds, the government could not cut off student loan assistance to the entire university. The effect of *Grove City* was thus to remove the incentive for educational institutions to establish uniform anti-sex discrimination policies.

The ruling provoked vehement objections, even within the Court. In his dissent, Justice William Brennan called the 6-to-3 opinion "an absurdity" that "clearly disregards the intent of Congress and weakens the anti-discrimination provisions" in the law. Civil rights supporters protested the decision not only for its immediate implications (after the Olympics, Packwood took to saying that had the *Grove City* ruling come down earlier it could have prevented Mary Lou Retton from winning the gold) but also for its potential effect on most of the major civil rights legislation of the past twenty years. Indeed, though the law in question—Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Act—is limited in application to educational institutions, its language regarding bias is the same as that in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (for the handicapped), and the 1975 Age Discrimination Act. Civil rights supporters feared the decision could result in renewed discrimination not just in schools, colleges, and universities, but also in state and local governments, hospitals, private corporations, and any organization that received federal assistance. "The issue at stake is as clear as it is fundamental—federal tax dollars should not be used in any way, shape, or form to subsidize discrimination," Kennedy said.

Hatch insisted, at least initially, that he opposed the act because he believed it would have unintended consequences, not because he objected to "institution-wide" coverage for anti-discrimination legislation. The bill represented, he said, "a vast expansion of federal authority and power in areas where it hadn't been before, and not just a return to the way things were before the *Grove City* case as Senator Kennedy claimed." The four civil rights statutes originally stated that "programs and activities" receiving federal funds were covered by federal anti-discrimination laws. In *Grove City* the Court interpreted that wording in the narrowest possible sense, taking it to mean less than the institution-wide coverage that liberal legislators assumed had been originally intended by Congress. The 1984 Civil Rights Act sought to overturn the Court's decision by substituting the broader term "recipients" for "programs and activities" in each of the four statutes.

Hatch maintained that the definition of "recipient" in the Kennedy-Packwood legislation was so broad that just about anyone who received a penny from Washington could, in theory, be subject to federal regulation. His objections to the bill's ambiguous language were legitimate. Even Kennedy conceded that groups and individuals who were not covered prior to *Grove City* might conceivably have been forced to bear a host of bureaucratic burdens such as federal compliance reviews. Taken to its logical extreme, the bill implied that groups such as grocery store owners accepting food stamps, small farmers taking crop subsidies, and landlords receiving rent vouchers could all be defined as "recipients" of federal aid.

Hatch was not alone in his opposition to the legislation. Although Kennedy and Packwood repeatedly declared that "no supporter of the Senate bill was attempting to extend prior law," some conservatives were not convinced. Linda Chavez, the Reagan-appointed staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, rightly pointed out that courts take into account both legislative history and statutory language when making a decision. The initial language of the bill was so vague, and the clarifications by the bill's supporters so many, that a judge could well have had difficulty deciding how to apply the law.

Nevertheless, there is reason to question the sincerity of Hatch's concerns about the bill's linguistic murkiness: indeed, he went to some lengths behind the scenes to make certain it would not be cleared up. The Labor and Human Resources Committee was the place to thrash out better legislative language. Hatch preferred to play politics. He scheduled eight mark-up hearings to deal with the act, but carefully placed the sessions after confirmation hearings for Rosemary Collyer—whose appointment as general counsel to the National Labor Relations Board many Democrats opposed. If the Democrats wanted the civil rights act, they had to swallow the Collyer nomination before discussions could even begin. Instead, the Democrats boycotted the committee sessions. "It was obvious to us from pretty early on that Hatch was using age-old and familiar obstruction tactics to prevent the bill from getting approval," says William Taylor of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a leading advocate for the bill.

IN SEPTEMBER Kennedy and Packwood tried another strategy. The idea was to strike a compromise acceptable to civil rights leaders, Hatch, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights William Bradford Reynolds, and Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker. Baker could then call for a full Senate debate of the bill—and hence a vote—

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without the usual committee recommendation. Kennedy and Packwood offered a grandfather clause to the bill that limited the definition of "recipient" to those who had been under the jurisdiction of federal law before the *Grove City* decision. This compromise met most of the conservatives' objections up to that point.

Admittedly, this was not a perfect solution, since it is not clear just who was covered before the Court ruling. Prior to *Grove City*, federal regulatory agencies tended to interpret the anti-discrimination laws broadly, while lower courts generally applied them in the narrowest sense by limiting the government's scope of action. Thus, most of the discrimination decisions previously reached by administrative agencies pleased the liberals, and most of those made by the judiciary satisfied conservatives. But because many more discrimination cases are dealt with administratively than judicially, the law, for all practical purposes, had given the federal government broad enforcement powers. Kennedy and Packwood were willing to go back to that imperfect situation, where they might lose a few court cases but would at least be assured of strict anti-discriminatory agency regulations and practices.

Hatch and Reynolds refused the compromise. Kennedy says that "marathon negotiating sessions . . . on September 19 and 20 achieved a major breakthrough. . . . A satisfactory agreement was actually at hand, but it fell apart for the final time when the Reagan Administration and its supporters backed off." Despite Hatch's earlier claims that a return to "the way things were before *Grove City*" would be acceptable, he refused to accept legislation that would have done just that. Clearly he not only feared an extension of federal power, but also wanted to roll back the liberal—and prevailing—interpretation of the law before the Court's ruling.

HATCH, THOUGH, was not the most important obstacle. Had the Reagan Administration, through Reynolds, pushed for a deal, it could have been achieved, even over Hatch's opposition. But Reynolds found a host of reasons to oppose the legislation. He echoed Chavez's complaint that the bill's legislative history could lead to inconsistent applications of the law by the courts—even though the Kennedy-Packwood compromise resolved that difficulty. He also cited numerous examples in which a liberal reading of the initial bill's language would lead to coverage of groups and individuals not subject to regulation before *Grove City*. There too the compromise eliminated the problems. On June 5, in Congressional testimony about the act, Reynolds had said he would be satisfied if the bill was "tailored to its stated purpose and carefully crafted." This could be accomplished, he had added, "with some modifications of the proposed definition of recipient . . . to its pre-*Grove City* status." When Kennedy and Packwood offered precisely those modifications, Reynolds rejected them.

It is hard not to conclude that the Administration was insincere all along. President Reagan had publicly opposed the bill when it was first proposed, yet he knew that if it won Congressional approval, he would have had no choice but to sign it. A Presidential veto of such politically sensitive legislation during an election year would have been unthinkable. The White House was determined to avoid precisely that situation. "They [the Administration] had two objectives: not to have the bill pass, and not to be charged with responsibility if it didn't," says Taylor of the Leadership Conference. "On both fronts, they succeeded."

WITH THE negotiations a failure and just twelve days left before Congress was scheduled to adjourn, Kennedy and Packwood attached the civil rights act to an unrelated emergency spending bill under discussion. This brought their legislation to the Senate floor. That effort prompted a dramatic, down-to-the-last-Senator vote on the validity of linking debate on civil rights to the appropriations bill; Kennedy and Packwood won the vote, 51 to 48. Hatch and his allies countered by attaching some 1,400 amendments to the legislation, including measures on such controversial issues as gun control, busing, abortion, and school prayer.

The debate turned into a game of chicken: which side would give in first? Kennedy and Hatch were prepared to take it all the way; Packwood, known to play strictly by the rules, was not. He proposed a motion to table his own bill. "My good friend from Utah has won on this occasion because the goals that I sought are simply beyond my grasp at this time, not because the cause is unworthy, nor because the fight was unfair," he declared. Packwood's allies were outraged. "He was just bending to intense pressure from other Republicans to give up," says one Democratic Senate aide closely involved in the proceedings. It was at this point that Kennedy took to the floor for one last try. But Packwood's tabling motion succeeded, and the 1984 Civil Rights Act was dead.

The President and his top aides continue to insist that their civil rights record is outstanding, and that the media has simply misrepresented it to the American people. The death of the 1984 Civil Rights Act suggests otherwise. The Administration's opposition, couched in legal technicalities and the rhetoric of reasonableness, had one effect: to condone the restriction of civil rights enforcement that the Supreme Court ordered in the *Grove City* case. This is all too consistent with the Administration's dubious civil rights record over the last four years.

Meanwhile, the damaging effects of the *Grove City* decision have already been felt. Within a month after the ruling, the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights dropped twenty-two pending discrimination cases in elementary schools, high schools, and colleges. All of these schools receive some kind of federal aid. Until *Grove City* is overturned, the government will be funding discrimination instead of fighting it.

ANTONY J. BLINKEN

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The idea of India after the death of Mrs. Gandhi.

DYNASTY AND DEMOCRACY

BY SALMAN RUSHDIE

ALL OF US who love India are in mourning. It is of no importance whether we numbered ourselves among Indira Gandhi's most fervent supporters or her most implacable opponents. Her murder diminishes us all and leaves a deep and alarming scar upon the very idea of India, much like that left on Pakistani society by General Zia's execution in 1979 of the leader who was in so many ways *son semblable, son frère*, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

During the time of Mrs. Gandhi's father, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian news media's favorite catch-phrase was the rather nervous, "After Nehru, who?" Today we ask ourselves a more fearful question: "After Indira, what?" It is clear that what is most to be feared is the continuation of reprisal killings, which already exceed considerably the number given by Indian officials, and of Hindu-Sikh communal violence, both inside and outside the Punjab. The wind was sown in Amritsar—now, perhaps (and it would be good to be wrong), the whirlwind ripens.

Where, in all this, can we find any scrap of hope for India's future? Where is the way forward that leads away from destruction, disintegration, and blood? I believe that if it is to be found anywhere, then it must begin, at this most difficult of times, with the clearest possible analysis of the mistakes of recent years.

At the heart of the idea of India lies a paradox. Its component parts, the states which coalesced in 1947 into the union, are ancient historical entities, with cultures and independent existences going back many centuries—but India itself is a mere thirty-seven years old. And yet it is the "new-born" India, the baby, so to speak, of the central government, that holds sway over the graybeards. Center-state relations have always, inevitably, been a somewhat delicate, fragile affair.

In recent years, however, that delicate relationship has developed severe imbalances, and much of the responsibility must lie at Mrs. Gandhi's door. During her time in office, power was systematically removed from the states to the government in New Delhi—and the resentments created by this process have been building for years. The troubles in the Punjab began when the Congress (I) leadership persistently refused to discuss the then very moderate demands of the Akali Dal Party for the restitution to the state government of powers that the center had seized. There can be no doubt that this intransigence was a major contributing factor to the growth of support for Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's terrorists, and to the whole sorry process which resulted in the attack on the Golden Temple.

Elsewhere in India, too, the center's power hunger has been very unpopular, and Congress (I) has suffered a string of defeats in state elections. Mrs. Gandhi's reaction to these defeats was sadly all too predictable, and very far from democratic. She embarked on covert programs of destabilization, one of which succeeded, at least temporarily, in toppling the popular and elected chief minister of Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah. Another backfired when N. T. Rama Rao was dismissed in Andhra Pradesh, and then had to be reinstated when it turned out that he still commanded a majority.

It is clear to any student of Indian affairs, and I hope it will be clear to the new Prime Minister, that all this nonsense must stop. There is no denying that the central government must govern. Still, it is time that the states' legitimate grievances receive the kind of sympathetic hearing that they have been denied for years. If this happens, there is a glimmer of hope for the future. If it does not, one must fear for the union.

The dangers of communalism, of the kind of religious sectarianism that motivated the assassins' bullets, are even more to be feared. Here is another of the paradoxes at the heart of the India idea: that the ethic of the independence movement, and of the independent state, has always been secular. Yet there are few nations on earth in which religion plays a more direct or central role in the citizens' daily lives.

In this area, too, there have always been tensions. In recent years these tensions have become more and more apparent. The growth of Hindu fanaticism, as evidenced by the increasing strength of the Rashtriya Swyam Sevak Sangh (R.S.S.), the organization that was behind the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, has been very worrying. It has had its parallel in the Bhindranwale group and, recently, in the increased support for the Muslim extremist Jamiat Party in Kashmir; this support is itself the result of the toppling of Farooq Abdullah by the center, which seemed to legitimize the Jamiats' view that Muslims have no place in present-day India.

One of the saddest aspects of the growth of communal-

Salman Rushdie won the 1981 Booker Prize for his novel about Indian independence, *Midnight's Children* (Knopf). His most recent novel is *Shame* (Knopf).

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ism has been that sometimes Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party has seemed to be going out to get the Hindu vote. That she was willing to sacrifice the Sikh vote by her attack on the Golden Temple, and the Muslim vote by her deposing of Farooq Abdullah, may be seen as evidence of this; and was all the more depressing, coming as it did from the leader of a party whose electoral success had always been based on its reputation as the guardian of minority groups' rights and safety. In recent times, the minorities—the Harijans, or untouchables, as well as Sikhs and Muslims—have been deserting the Congress (I) fold. I very much hope that the new Congress leadership will give up, once and for all, the idea that the party can win elections by playing the communalist card, and remember the secular ethic on which the future of the country depends.

It is also necessary to say—and it is hard to say this at such a time—that one of the threats to democracy in India has come in recent years from the dynastic aspirations of the Nehru family itself, and from the peculiarly monarchic style of government which Mrs. Gandhi developed. Let us remember about the Nehrus—Motilal, his son Jawaharlal, Jawaharlal's daughter Indira, and her sons Rajiv and Sanjay—that when it comes to power they make the Kennedys look like amateurs. For thirty-one of India's thirty-seven years of independence, there has been a Nehru in control. Lately New Delhi has not felt like the capital of an elective democracy at all, but rather like an old-fashioned *durbar*, a court.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In many cases, the powerful figures in this court have not been members of the government, or even of the Indian Parliament. They have, rather, been a motley assortment of old school chums of Sanjay or Rajiv; billionaire businessmen; even, at times, one or two manifestations of that group of religious gurus now known in India as "Godmen." This cloud of courtiers enveloped Mrs. Gandhi, and it would be a great advance if they were now to lose power. For this reason it seems to me quite wrong for Congress (I) to choose, as its new leader, a man as untried, and as unsuited for high office as Rajiv Gandhi. It is time for India to assert, and for its ruling party to demonstrate, that the nation is not owned by any one family, no matter how illustrious. The queen is dead. *Vive la république.*

I am not trying to lay all of modern India's many ills at the door of the butchered Prime Minister. Political corruption is one of India's besetting ills, and there has been plenty of it in the Congress (I) Party, but of course it is not all Mrs. Gandhi's responsibility. Nor will the task of cleaning the stables be easy. But it is up to the new leadership to show the way. It must reject the idea of getting votes by appealing to religious sectarianism, give up using the Congress Party machine as an instrument of patronage, stop undermining the authority of the civil service, desist from bribing and corrupting supporters of its political opponents in order to achieve in back rooms what has not been achieved by the ballot box, and show that India is not in the grip of any new imperium. And it must restore our faith in the India idea.

What, centrally, is that idea? It is based on the most obvious and apparent fact about the great subcontinent: multitude. For a nation of 700 million to make any kind of sense, it must base itself firmly, wherever possible, on the concept of multiplicity, of plurality and tolerance, of devolution and decentralization. There can be no one way—religious, cultural, or linguistic—of being an Indian. Let difference reign.

On the face of it, Mrs. Gandhi's legacy in the field of foreign relations presents her son's administration with fewer problems. Ever since she left her husband, Feroze Gandhi, in 1949, and returned to her father's house, to become Jawaharlal Nehru's official hostess, Mrs. Gandhi moved with considerable assurance and no little skill in the world of international affairs. The speed with which she managed to persuade the world to forget the atrocities committed during her years of Emergency rule was evidence of her gifts. She managed, for the most part, to keep the balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. The long-standing Russian alliance never led to any ideological shift toward Soviet-style communism; quite the reverse, in fact, as in recent years Mrs. Gandhi openly abandoned her earlier socialist rhetoric in favor of a nakedly capitalist program. And as leader of the nonaligned movement, she gave India great stature in the eyes of the peoples of the Third World, many of whom found the relative stability and liberty of the Indian system a source of pride and admiration.

Still, there are deep uncertainties in this area as well. It's easy to say that the new government should, and in all

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likelihood will, attempt simply to continue the foreign policies of the last. In practice, however, things will be much trickier. Our knowledge of Mrs. Gandhi's great experience and diplomacy only underlines the complete inexperience of Rajiv and his group. Add to this the possibility of a period of prolonged political instability in India, and you have a recipe for a rapid increase in superpower meddling. India may be about to become the world's biggest political football.

And then there is Pakistan. It's only a matter of weeks since rumors of Mrs. Gandhi's willingness to find a pretext for a war with Pakistan were rife in the Indian capital. There are some grounds for giving credence to these rumors. Mrs. Gandhi was extremely nervous, with good reason, about the outcome of the approaching general election; and she well remembered her electoral landslide after the Bangladesh war (to say nothing of Mrs. Thatcher's after the Falklands). Moreover, a couple of months ago Rajiv Gandhi made some very odd, saber-rattling noises, accusing Pakistan of trying to start a war. To many observers this was a manifest absurdity. Even a general will not fail to notice that it would be foolish to go to war with India when India's biggest ally, Russia, is sitting on his other frontier. And yet the question remains: If the situation in India continues to deteriorate, will Rajiv's thoughts turn once again to war? One can only hope they do not.

Two clichés about India must be dismissed, especially as both of them, in these first days after news of the assassination, have reared their wizened old heads. First, the probability of a military coup in India to establish a parallel dictatorship to that of General Zia across the border is, I believe, so slight that it can be discounted, if only because the entire history of India demonstrates the impossibility of conquering the place by military force. Second, the bullets that killed Mrs. Gandhi did not "prove" the unsuitability of democracy for India, any more than the killing of two Kennedys or the Brighton bombing proved the same about the United States or Britain. The idea of a united, democratic, secular India can survive this terrible day.

For the moment, however, all of us who are Indian by citizenship, or birth, or race, must accept that the assassination of Indira Gandhi shames us all. And in that shame, we must hope, the people and leaders of India will find the strength to act with honor in the months to come.

If you can't beat them, 'joint venture' with them.

JAPAN INC., U.S.A.

BY ROBERT B. REICH

AMERICA'S TRADE WAR with Japan is taking a dramatic new turn. Not so long ago the battle lines were clear. It was us against them: American companies and their workers trying valiantly to survive against an onslaught of cheaper and better Japanese goods. We charged them with dumping their wares here at prices below their production costs. We accused their government of giving certain export industries special subsidies and preferential financing. American companies and their unions duly marched to Washington to get import restrictions on Japanese automobiles, video cassette recorders, steel, motorcycles, and a host of other products. An accommodating Reagan Administration preserved its free market oratory while forcing the Japanese to sign "voluntary" agreements to restrain their exporters.

Now the battle lines have become blurred. In a trend that began two years ago, but has accelerated in recent months, American firms are linking up with their former rivals in a vast array of "joint ventures" and "purchase agreements." Japanese companies are buying up American companies or are building new plants in the United States, employing American workers. American companies are building plants in Japan, hiring Japanese. As a result of all this activity, the national interests underlying our trade policy with Japan—never terribly clear to begin with—have grown even foggier. Just who is *us*? And who's *them*?

Consider Houdaille Industries, a Florida-based manufacturer of computer-controlled machine tools. Beginning in 1982 Houdaille set out to block imports of competing Japanese machine tools. The company petitioned for protection, accusing the Japanese of dumping and of receiving subsidies from the Japanese government. When that strategy didn't work, Houdaille tried to persuade the Administration to deny to American buyers of Japanese machine tools the 10 percent investment tax credit on equipment. It even hired a Washington lawyer to prowl around Japan's machine tool manufacturers with a video tape recorder, documenting how the Japanese government was helping the industry. After a bitter split in the Administration over what to do, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone of Japan personally persuaded President Reagan to deny

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the company's request. Undaunted, Houdaille made the rounds of the Defense Department and Congress, arguing that its own continued profitability was critical to national security. When even this ploy failed to summon a response, Houdaille abruptly changed course. Several months ago it announced that it would seek a joint venture with Japan's Okuma Machinery Works. "If we can't beat them," a company spokesman told *The New York Times*, "we'll joint venture with them."

ALMOST EVERY American industry with a history of bitter conflict with Japan is showing sudden signs of born-again cooperation. In the last year a large number of American firms have joined forces with Japanese firms to manufacture products and components in Japan (see box on page 21). Meanwhile, Japanese factories are starting to dot the American landscape. Honda is making cars in Ohio; Nissan, trucks in Tennessee. Japanese steelmakers are buying into American producers. In April, Nippon Kokan, Japan's second biggest steelmaker, bought a controlling interest in National Steel. In August, Nippon Kokan announced that it would take a 40 percent stake in Martin Marietta's non-ferrous metal manufacturing operations in California.

Hundreds of Japanese high-tech companies are setting up shop in America. In the last four months alone, more than forty new plants have been established by the leading lights of Japanese technology—NEC, Fujitsu, Sony—to produce everything from personal computers to cellular mobile telephones. Japanese companies are even building laboratories here. For example, Nippondenso is establishing a research center in Detroit to focus on automobile electronics and ceramics, and Nakamichi is setting one up in California to develop innovations in computer peripherals. And nearly every major Japanese company is now funding research at American universities, on the condition that it get first crack at licensing any technology that emerges.

Why all this mixing and matching? American manufacturers' new-found willingness to join forces with the Japanese is attributable largely to the overvalued dollar and to superior Japanese production technology. For example, a small turning machine that Bendix sells in the United States for $105,000 can be made in Cleveland for $85,000; but if made in Japan by Bendix's new partner, Murata Manufacturing, and then shipped to Cleveland, the machine costs the company only $65,000.

Japan's motive for cooperating comes from a different source: concern about mounting U.S. trade barriers. In 1981, some 20 percent of goods manufactured in the United States were protected by some sort of import restriction; by 1984, 35 percent were protected. If the Reagan Administration succumbed so readily to protectionism, what about a future Administration less ideologically committed to free trade? The Japanese are particularly worried about trade in high-technology products. The American market for these wondrous goods has exploded in recent years, thanks to Yuppies setting up housekeeping, defense contractors, and the deregulated telecommunications industry. The Japanese need to keep a piece of this expanding market in order to gain the scale and experience necessary to dominate these industries.

How, then, to forestall American protectionism? Simple: do an end-run around the borders. First, enter into supply contracts with American companies, and build new factories in the United States. That way, American workers get jobs assembling Japanese components and then selling the finished goods. American workers become partners in Japanese enterprises. Second, set up research facilities around the United States staffed with American scientists. As a result of this two-pronged approach, national borders will blur. Distinctions between Japanese and American firms will lose their meaning. We will become a single, integrated, trans-Pacific production system. There will be no more trade protection, because there'll be nothing more to protect. This commingling is comfortable enough for the American companies involved, and for many American workers. It also makes eminent sense for the Japanese. But does it make sense for *America*?

LOOK CLOSELY at these new joint ventures and transnational investments. There is a pattern to them. Basic research leading to initial product design is carried out in the United States. Then, production of the most complex parts and sophisticated assemblies occurs in Japan. Back in America, workers put the final pieces together. And finally, a different group of American workers distributes, markets, and sells the products to other Americans. In other words, we take charge of the two ends of the production process—the new innovations, and the final assembly and sales. The Japanese concentrate on the complex manufacturing process in between.

You can see the pattern clearly in advanced machine tools and robots—the machines that make everything else. American design engineers are now coming up with designs for the next generation of tools. These include advanced machining centers, computer-controlled lathes, and systems for integrating all the new machines together. Many of these ideas are being sent directly to Japan, where they are being transformed into products. Soon the new machine tools and robots will be coming back to the United States, many to be sold under American brand names. Last year over 75 percent of the machining centers sold in America were made in Japan. Houdaille's new joint venture with Okuma Machinery is typical of the trend. Under the terms of the agreement, Houdaille will simply market and distribute Okuma's computer-controlled lathes in the United States, under Houdaille's name. Other machine tool manufacturers are following suit. Last year, for example, nearly all of Warner and Swasey's machine tool production was transferred to Japan.

Look closely at the new tie-ups between American and Japanese computer and semiconductor manufacturers, and you'll see the same pattern. Breakthroughs in chip design continue to happen in the United States. But the

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Japanese are better at producing them cheaply and reliably. So American computer manufacturers are linking up with Japanese semiconductor makers to supply them with the memory chips they need for their computers. Meanwhile, American chip makers are setting up production facilities in Japan—to be managed and staffed by Japanese. The semiconductors that the Japanese are starting to fabricate in the United States represent the most standardized segment of that market, for which all the jobs are relatively routine.

Japanese computer manufacturers, on the other hand, are linking up with American semiconductors not to buy chips but to sell Japanese computers in the United States. National Semiconductor, for example, will be selling Hitachi's IBM-compatible mainframe computer through National's distribution network. Firms like Honeywell, Tandy, and Sperry are getting out of the production of computers and peripherals. They are turning instead to their Japanese partners—NEC, Kyolera, and Mitsubishi respectively—to supply them with original equipment to be sold in America under their brand names. Even NEC's new computer facility in Massachusetts fits the pattern. It will merely assemble and market the computers; their central processing units and memory chips are all coming from Japan.

It's the same story in automobiles. Basic innovations continue to come from America, and most of the cars to be sold here will be assembled here. But whether they're called Fords or Hondas, their most sophisticated components and systems are apt to be produced in Japan. (See "Collusion Course," THE NEW REPUBLIC, February 27, 1984.) It's becoming the same in telecommunications. Regardless of whose brand names grace all the new private-branch exchanges, cellular telephones, and optic fiber cables being sold in America, an increasing proportion of the sophisticated innards are being produced in Japan. It's the same in consumer electronic products like videocassette recorders and audio disc players. GE and RCA have their names on many of them, but they're all made in Japan. The list goes on—facsimile equipment, large-scale integrated circuits, sensing devices. Burroughs and Hewlett-Packard have just set up offices in Japan to procure these and other high-tech components. Even the steel mills that the Japanese are now planning to build or modernize in the United States will get their advanced steel-making machinery from—where else?—Japan.

So what's the problem? We make money from transferring our ideas to them. They make money by selling them back to us encased within terrific products and parts. It seems like a nice deal all around.

Except for one thing. Along the way, a large number of them gain experience and skill in making products cheaply and well. They learn how to organize themselves for production—integrating design, fabrication, and manufacturing; using computers to enhance their skills; developing new flexibility. They learn how to make the kinds of small, incremental improvements in production processes and products that can make all the difference in price, quality, and marketability. In short, they develop the collective capacity to transform raw ideas quickly into world-class goods.

Such experience in *making* products generates more social wealth than does inventing them or assembling and selling them. Production experience raises the overall level of skills in a population. It's a kind of social learning that can be applied generally, across all kinds of goods—not just the latest inventions. An entire nation benefits from having a large pool of workers with these valuable production skills.

By contrast, only a comparatively few of us gain very much experience inventing the new technologies to begin with. Basic inventions don't raise the overall level of skills in a society, or generate broad experience. Indeed, they can flow across national boundaries at the speed of an electronic transmission—reaching Seoul almost as soon as they reach St. Louis.

Nor are the jobs at the *other* end of the production process—routine assembly, marketing, and sales—the

A Sampling Of New And Planned U.S.-Japan Joint Ventures

AUTOMOBILES
GM-Toyota
Ford-Mazda
Chrysler-Mitsubishi Motors

COMPUTERS
IBM-Matsushita Electric
Sperry-Univac-Nippon Univac
National Semiconductor-Hitachi
Honeywell-NEC
Tandy-Kyolera
Sperry-Mitsubishi

COPIERS, PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT
Kodak-Canon

DISC PLAYERS, AIR CONDITIONERS
GE-Matsushita

JET LINERS
Boeing-Mitsubishi Heavy Industries
Kawasaki Heavy Industries
Fuji Heavy Industries

LIGHTWEIGHT PLASTIC COMPOSITES
Armco-Mitsubishi Rayon

MACHINE TOOLS
Bendix-Murata Machinery Company
GM-Fujitsu Fanuc
Houdaille-Okuma
Houdaille-Mayekawa

PROGRAMMABLE CONTROLLERS AND SENSORS
Allen Bradley-Nippondenso

ROBOTS AND SMALL MOTORS
Westinghouse-Komatsu, Mitsubishi Electric
IBM-Sanyo Seiko

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sort that will enrich a nation's work force in the global economy. Marketing and sales are largely sheltered from international trade, and tend to be tailored to a national economy. Most low-skilled assembly operations will be automated in years to come, or else done by workers in less-developed nations at a fraction of the cost.

The Japanese well understand this new reality. That's why they would rather invest in production experience than in basic invention or in final assembly and sales. Their overriding goal is to keep complex production in Japan—to develop a national *competitive advantage* in advanced production methods. And they understand that this goal does not depend solely on Japanese-based companies. Increasingly, American firms are participating in the same strategy by channeling their new inventions to Japan, and then providing a sales and distribution network for the resulting products.

THERE IS A temptation to depict this as a plot through which the Japanese intend to emerge in a decade or so with the world's most skilled work force, and the highest standard of living. Surely the Japanese are implementing their strategy with great care. But there is nothing particularly sinister about it. Americans will continue to benefit from the availability of inexpensive, high-quality products and components coming from Japan.

More to the point, American-based companies *could* begin to invest in more sophisticated production in the United States. They could develop in our work force the same base of advanced manufacturing experience that Japan is now creating among Japanese workers. It's not Japan's fault that American firms are failing to do this. From the standpoint of a typical American company, there's simply not enough return on this sort of investment to justify its cost.

Production experience is essentially *social*. It exists in employees' minds, hands, and work relationships. It cannot be patented like a new invention. It can't be packaged, or sold directly. In other words, it's a form of property that can't be claimed by the managers who decide to invest in it and the shareholders whom they represent. So long as the Constitution continues to bar involuntary servitude, this form of property belongs entirely to a firm's work force—and it will leave the firm whenever the workers do.

Imagine that the chief executive of an American firm decides to invest in the same sort of production experience for the firm's American workers that Japanese workers are now receiving. Instead of relying upon a Japanese supplier for a complex component, this enlightened executive decides to produce it here in America, inside the firm. The component costs far more to produce here than in Japan—the equivalent of $1,000 more per employee. This is partly due to the overvalued dollar, but more directly to the fact that the Japanese already have invested in producing this component cheaply and reliably. But our enlightened executive looks upon this added expense as an investment in his own firm's workers. He figures that once his workers gain the experience of making the component, they'll be better able to make all sorts of other things thereafter; they'll learn a great deal about this advanced technology, and can apply that learning in countless ways to improve the firm's other processes and products. He estimates that, over the long term (and discounted to present value), the firm will gain about $1,500 per employee in these sorts of improvements. So the initial $1,000 investment—with a 50 percent return—is well worth it. He instructs his workers to make the advanced component.

Our enlightened executive is delighted to discover that his prediction was correct. After producing the component themselves, the firm's workers are far more knowledgeable about this area of technology. And they can see all sorts of ways in which their new learning can be applied to other things the firm makes, and even to the firm's manufacturing systems.

But wait. The workers know they are now more valuable to the firm than they were before—about $1,500 per employee more valuable. Good capitalists that they are, they ask to be paid at least $1,499 more than they were earning before. If the executive won't consent to the pay increase, they tell him, they will simply leave the firm and go work for the competition. Surely the competition is willing to pay $1,499 for a $1,500 benefit. Our enlightened executive reluctantly accedes to their demand, even though it just about wipes out any gain from the initial investment. But he vows that from now on he'll buy advanced components from Japan.

THE JAPANESE are organized somewhat differently. Generally speaking, workers remain with their firms for life. This is particularly true for workers in the larger firms that make advanced products for export. They identify with their firms, and their firms with them. To go over to the competition is considered unseemly or worse. And a firm's executives are hardly the agents of some disembodied group of shareholders; most shares are held by other companies and banks in the same industrial group. Executives are more accurately seen as agents of all those who work inside the firm and depend on it for their livelihood and social status. So an investment in the collective knowledge of the work force comes quite naturally. Benefits that result from such an investment tend to remain with the firm.

In consequence, the Japanese will invest like mad in production experience; American firms won't. Instead, they'll invest in patentable inventions, buy advanced components from Japan, perhaps put the parts together, stick their own brand name on the resulting product, and distribute it for sale in America.

This tale is not as new as it may seem. For at least forty years America has led the world in technical breakthroughs. But we've been steadily losing our edge in making products. We invented the solid-state transistor. Then, in 1953, Western Electric licensed the technology to Sony for $25,000, and the rest is history. Around the same

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time RCA licensed several Japanese companies to make color televisions, and that was the beginning of the end of color-TV production in America. In 1968 Unimation licensed Kawasaki Heavy Industries to make industrial robots; the nascent American robotics industry never quite recovered. We came up with the first video-cassette recorder, the first open-hearth furnaces, the first continuous casters for making steel, the first automobile-stamping machines. All of these technologies—and many others—quickly found their way into Japanese production, and then into American sales.

What's new is that this pattern is now taking place *within* enterprises that are becoming multinational. These days, company names—whether affixed to final products or displayed over factory gates—reveal very little about which nation's work force is actually doing what. IBM is making things in Osaka, and Fujitsu is making things in Oregon, and both are making parts for the same final products. Studies that purport to show relative market shares of Japanese and American companies in a given industry are equally beside the point. The underlying issue is not where company headquarters are located or profits remitted, but the relative value added by a nation's work force to an increasingly global process of production—and hence the capacity of that work force to generate new future wealth.

As enterprise identities grow increasingly blurred, it is becoming ever harder to define and measure exactly how and where we are losing our *workers'* competitive position. Perhaps more to the point, it is becoming ever harder to summon the political will to do something about it.

In any event, what could be done? Protectionism is no answer. Even if we could disentangle all these high-tech alliances and discover some discrete activities that could be protected, there would be little point. Trade barriers erected against the advanced components and products coming from Japan would just drive up the costs of all these things for purchasers in the United States, including many firms that intend to put their final products into international competition. And such barriers are hardly likely to make American firms any more willing to invest in the production experience of their workers, when the workers could still leave and take their experience with them.

APART FROM a wholesale reorganization of American capitalism toward worker ownership (a prospect that seems highly remote at this point), the only sensible alternative is to prod companies that are doing business in America—regardless of where they're headquartered—to invest in complex production in America, using American workers. Because many of the benefits of such investment are inherently social—enjoyed by a large number of us, in the form of a higher standard of living—the prod should take the form of tax breaks and subsidies. That is, companies should reap an extra *public* reward for investing in production experience, to make up for the relatively meager private rewards of doing so.

In addition, we will need a massive effort aimed at getting new technologies into American production as fast as possible. To this end, federal and state governments could sponsor what might be called "technology extension services," modeled on the highly successful agricultural extension services, which would inform smaller businesses about the latest methods in manufacturing technology, and undertake demonstrations. The antitrust laws could be modified to permit companies operating in the same region of the country to jointly establish training programs that would acquaint their employees with new technologies, and to institute pilot programs that would test how the technologies might be applied to certain manufacturing problems. State governments and smaller businesses could set up "monitoring stations" in foreign nations, to keep tabs on the latest advances in research and development that might be commercialized in the United States.

ALL THIS would entail a shift in public support from research and development and toward manufacturing engineering. This fiscal year, the federal government will spend over $45 billion on research and development, a sum representing almost 50 percent of America's research and development expenditures. Over $12 billion of this total will go to civilian science and technology; almost $7 billion to basic research alone. But no money will go toward commercial production.

Indeed, the Reagan Administration continues to direct civilian R&D away from commercial applications, on the mistaken assumption that the private sector can be expected to take care of this area. By the same token, the 25 percent tax credit for research and development, enacted in 1981, excludes expenses incurred in bringing into production a technology such as process development, equipment development, or employee training. This bias should be reversed. And state governments continue to set up research parks in bucolic settings remote from heavy industries. Instead, they should be establishing "vest pocket" technology parks in the midst of their factories, so that the resulting research is directly related to production. Our future national wealth has less to do with research than with its commercial applications. The fruits of our research are taking seed abroad.

In the short term, our overvalued dollar will continue to generate massive trade deficits. We can expect, therefore, that concerns about America's competitiveness will continue unabated. Particularly in high-technology industries, we will be subject to an endless parade of reports showing the relative positions of Japan and the United States. Eventually the dollar will fall and the trade balance will improve. But in the meantime, American companies will have been quietly forging new links with their Japanese counterparts, and the Japanese will have transplanted part of their businesses here. We may wake up one morning to find "our" companies winning the high-tech sweepstakes. But we may also discover that all the while we have been running in the wrong race. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A War; a Farewell

Sincerity is a snare if the artist leans on it too heavily. *The Killing Fields* is sincere but not much else, and it's a disappointment. It tells the true story of Sydney Schanberg, who was *The New York Times* correspondent in Cambodia from 1972 until he had to flee in 1975; of how he had to abandon his Cambodian aide

The Killing Fields
(Warner Bros.)

and friend, Dith Pran; of Schanberg's anguished efforts in the U.S. to locate Dith in Cambodia; of Dith's excruciations under the Khmer Rouge; of his escape in 1979 and his reunion with Schanberg in Thailand. The story, pain-filled though it is, eventually is a happy one—happy because Dith survived the butchering that did away with millions of his countrymen and because, with Schanberg's help, he reached the United States, where he is now a photographer for the *Times*. David Puttnam, the producer of the film, doubtless sincerely wanted to put the Cambodian bloodbath in the minds of Western audiences. (In the roll call of twentieth-century bloodbaths—among them, Stalin's, Hitler's, the Hindu-Muslim massacres, the Indonesian purge—the Asian ones don't really register in the West.) And doubtless Puttnam saw the Schanberg-Dith story almost as a gift by life to film, a ready-made epitome of its era. But his picture is hobbled by its sincerity, which in itself isn't flawless.

The first sincere mistake was in casting the role of Schanberg with Sam Waterston, an actor whom Puttnam may have thought right because he's free of sham. This is true; but Waterston has little more to his artistic name than sincerity. How manfully he strives to be honest, and how transparently the striving shows through. Almost all that Waterston brings to a performance (I've seen him often, on stage and screen) is commitment. His acting resources are skimpy: his face is petty and beady-eyed, his voice is lackluster, his body is a graceless mechanism. (Compare this last with John Malkovich, who plays an American photographer in Cambodia and whose body radiates energy even when he's slumping in a chair.) The nonactor who plays Dith, a physician named Hain S. Ngor, who went through many of the Khmer Rouge torments himself, is more credible and affecting than Waterston.

Roland Joffé, a young English director making his feature film debut, seems equally committed to the material, but he makes the swirl of events during the fall of Phnom Penh more confusing than frightening. It's not always clear what's going on. And the many sequences of hysterical yet cold-blooded brutality of the Khmer Rouge often seem like familiar film sequences instead of true horror. Not one original touch in the composition or flow is evident in Joffé's work; besides which, he is susceptible to sunset silhouettes.

The screenwriter, Bruce Robinson, can't be accused of quite so much sincerity, but then he had the difficult job of transmuting what *seemed* like good film material into film material. The ungrateful fact is that the Schanberg-Dith story is not, as a double story, dramatic. Through the bulk of the film, the American is scratching at the outside of circumstances while the Cambodian is suffering within them. Then, through no effort of the American's (though he tried incessantly), the Cambodian escapes after four years, and the pair are reunited. Most of the story is really about the Cambodian's sufferings, and Robinson has to pump to keep the Schanberg part even moderately alive on screen. He has Dith address Schanberg on the soundtrack during his lonely struggles, as if confiding in his distant friend, but the device is lame. To deepen Schanberg's character, Robinson has Schanberg watch TV grimly, especially Nixon—material that implicates the American incursion into Cambodia as helpful to the Khmer Rouge. And Robinson whoops up the least sincere scene in the film: after Schanberg gets an award in a plush hotel for his Cambodia reporting, he encounters the photographer (Malkovich) who berates him for not doing more to help Dith. The scene is senseless because Schanberg is doing all he can and because the photographer isn't doing anything at all. It's a blatant piece of padding. To make it worse, Robinson and Joffé set it in a men's room, as if to say: "How could anything set in such a 'real' place be mere movie padding?" The "real" setting only makes it phonier.

I know of only one film, other than documentaries, that deals competently with Vietnam and kindred disasters, *Go Tell the Spartans* (TNR, June 24, 1978). *The Killing Fields* is bigger but not as good. I'm sure that when Puttnam read Schanberg's now-celebrated account in *The New York Times Magazine* of January 20, 1980, his response was humanely

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Amadeus. Nonsense, biographically and thematically. But deftly executed, with some Mozart passages to hear, some gorgeousness to look at, and a good performance from F. Murray Abraham as Salieri. (Reviewed 10/22/84)

Bizet's Carmen. The best "orthodox" opera film that I know, writhing sinuously around the screen as Carmen herself does. All three principals sing well, Julia Migenes-Johnson also performs well. The whole familiar work sounds and looks fresh. (9/17&24/84)

A Soldier's Story. Has the feel of a 1950s "liberal" film but is more smartly done. The murder of a black army sergeant on a Louisiana base in 1944 is investigated by a black captain, undeterred by black and white interference. (10/15/84)

Stranger than Paradise. An intelligent, dry, small-scale American film about three laid-back young people, drifting along on a sluggish current. Subtle and witty. (10/29/84)

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genuine. I wish that his sincerity had been rewarded—could have been rewarded—with a better film.

I had dinner once with François Truffaut—in Brooklyn, of all places. It was in 1965, I think, when he was in New York to organize the filming of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. He and his translator were invited to the Brooklyn Heights home of Bradbury's literary agent who invited me, too, both because of my keen interest in Truffaut and because, in my book-publishing days, I had been Bradbury's editor on *Fahrenheit 451*. After dinner, without announcement, our host put on a record of "Singin' in the Rain." Truffaut leaned back in his chair, then started to hum and to make his hands do a little dance as he remembered Gene Kelly. I thought of that moment when I heard the shocking news of his death on October 21 at the age of 52.

During that Brooklyn evening I asked a question or two, to our host's wry amusement, about why Truffaut wanted to film a book that was so far out of his vein. The questions made him impatient, but in the course of time the film made many of his admirers impatient. (By mordant coincidence, Oskar Werner, the star of the film, died three days after Truffaut.) What his admirers wanted from him—which the Bradbury book, whatever its merits, could not permit him—was his unique quality: the lyric lift with which he treated joy and poignancy, savagery and death.

Two chief subjects are visible in his body of work, children and women. No director has ever dealt better with children, and not many have dealt comparably well. Truffaut seemed to become one of the children, not an adult looking down on them fondly, whether it was the Antoine of *The Four Hundred Blows* or the Wild Child himself or the youngsters in *Small Change*.

Closely connected with his feelings for children (as *The Four Hundred Blows* demonstrates) were his more complex feelings about women. He adored them, and he quite literally feared them. To him, women were objects of romance, in an old-style, balcony-serenade way, and were also killers of men, in the most steely-eyed, post-Freudian way. After the man in *The Soft Skin* fixes a rendezvous by telephone, he walks around his darkened hotel room unconsciously turning on all the lights until the room looks as bright as he feels.

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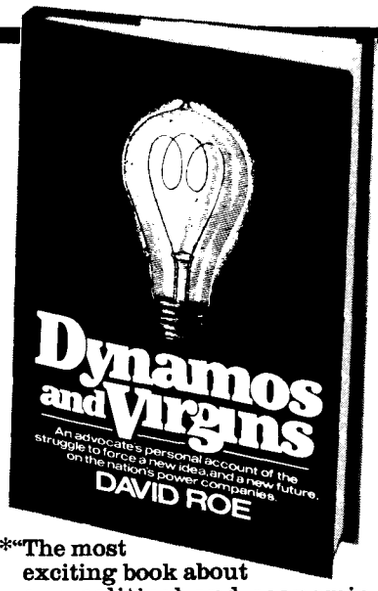
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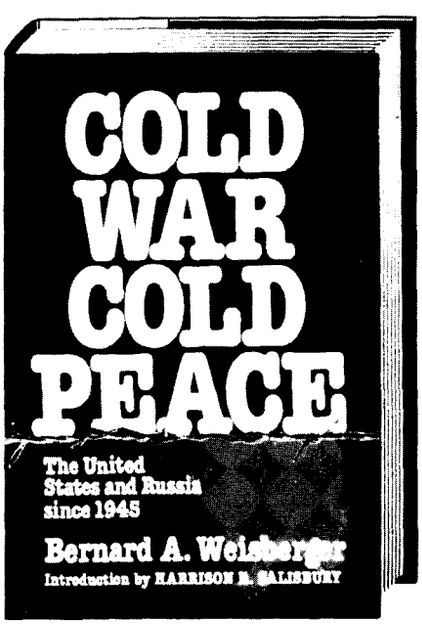

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When the man in *The Woman Next Door* keeps his rendezvous and is lying on his lover, she takes a pistol from her handbag and blows out his brains. The marvel of Truffaut was that all these matters, and more, were touched by the same unique, vaulting imagination. In 1964 I made a three-month trip around Europe, east and west, talking to film people, and I asked directors everywhere the same question: Among working directors, who are the ones who mean most to you? Almost always the answers were: Ford, Godard, and Truffaut—and with the name Truffaut, they almost always smiled.

The received wisdom about lyric poets is that, like mathematicians, they do their best work when young. This is pretty cool compensation for Truffaut's relatively early death, even if almost all his best work was done before he was 40. More of Truffaut's lesser work would be stratospheres above what we usually see, would very likely have continued to evoke that smile, which is fundamentally one of gratitude. In a backward look at *Jules and Jim* four years after it appeared, I said: "Whatever its shortcomings, *Jules and Jim* is one of the moments when the history of the film suddenly glows." The comment applies to Truffaut's whole career.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Royal Tourist Attraction

What has become of the Royal Shakespeare Company? The productions of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* now playing at the Gershwin Theater (after a stopover at the Olympics Arts Festival in Los Angeles) are suggestive of a great theater in decline. I'm not protesting a lack of skill or grace, or even visual artistry—indeed, the problem may be related to a surplus of these values. It's just that the offerings are so bloody tame and insipid, from play choices to production concepts, that you leave the theater with tired blood. What we have here is the New York equivalent of a London show tour—the only element missing is an ad for British Airways. Yes, I know the R.S.C. has always been a rest stop for tourists wandering through Anne Hathaway's cottage and Shakespeare's gardens, but at least in the old days there were some crazy salads at the Aldwych accompanying those Stratford plum puddings. To judge by this visit and by the recent *All's Well That End's Well* (and let's not forget Trevor Nunn's mechanical contribution to *Cats*), the R.S.C. directorate has settled into manufacturing pyrotechnical displays for an audience eager to be soothed rather than challenged—an ideal theater for the Thatcher/Reagan/Bush age.

Much Ado About Nothing
by William Shakespeare

Cyrano de Bergerac
by Edmond Rostand

Both audiences and actors are in a state of extreme euphoria at the conclusion of both these long evenings, largely because the director, Terry Hands, has wrapped them in banners and flags, thereby smothering their deeper, darker energies. *Cyrano* is all rodomontade and smoke effects, *Much Ado* simply grandiloquence and elocution. The vocal and visual pageantry is attractive, but, like Christian de Neuvillette's good looks, it hides a vacant soul. Where is the effort to penetrate character or investigate text? And what has happened to the company's ensemble ideals? *Nicholas Nickleby* was consumer theater, but at least we saw good actors in a variety of roles. Here two "stars"—Derek Jacobi and Sinead Cusack—dominate the major parts, while the supporting players are often cast to type: the villain De Guiche playing the villain Don John; the clown Montfleury playing the clown Dogberry, etc. We are back in the barnstorming tradition of nineteenth-century Romantic theater, not a theater devoted to stretching its actors or pushing forward the boundaries of the stage.

Jacobi is possessed of apparently unquenchable energy; he is also intelligent, good-natured, and likable, particularly in that swaybacked warhorse *Cyrano*, where a lack of genuine histrionic depth is not likely to be perceived. He can't be entirely faulted for playing so much to the house and so little to his fellow performers, considering how he has been cast and directed—and how the audience is being encouraged to applaud his entrances, exits, even his set speeches. Jacobi first came to attention in this country in a TV series as the reticent stammering Emperor Claudius; reticence is no longer among his stage virtues. True, the posturing role of Cyrano, a character barely off stage a moment after a delay designed to raise our blood pressure for the entrance of a star, is not designed for a modest actor. Supreme in all he attempts, whether poetry, drama, swordsmanship, warfare, astronomy, or braggadocio, "the three Musketeers, Jesus Christ, and Don Quixote all in one," he has but one imperfection (if you discount his impossible nobility)—his nose. An ugly exterior concealing a mighty soul is a popular motif of sentimental drama—in the next century we get *The Elephant Man*. But the notion of a Superman possessed of a single flaw is one that belongs in the comic books or the operettas of Friml and Lehár. Jacobi warbles the required arias effectively in a vigorous barking tenor voice, and bites into the plot with full conviction. But he does little to disguise the creakiness of the story or the fake heroics of the central character.

WHAT surprises me is that the audience doesn't care. I am not invulnerable to the charms of this nineteenth-century salute to the age of Louis Quinze, but I would think that even in our jingoist time a new version would have to look hard at a hero who has no trouble defeating a hundred ruffians single-handed, or surviving serious wounds ("It's nothing, it's a scratch"), or daily risking his life to send off a love letter he has written for the vacuous Christian. And what about Roxanne, the narcissistic post-debutante who falls for Christian's looks, and then threatens to blow him off because he doesn't have language hyperbolic enough to poeticize love or flatter her beauty? Is she blind in the final scene not to notice Cyrano dying of a head wound, dropping tears and blood all over his letter, and staggering around the stage like a gored bull? Is she deaf or just simple-

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minded not to recognize the voice that wooed her so many years before?

Sinead Cusack plays this role and plays it poorly. It's not just that she's too old for Roxanne and a little too frumpy, but that her hoarse simpering delivery substitutes winsomeness for character—an attention to diction rather than depth that makes her sound like Liza Doolittle wheezing over phonetics. But the entire production is a technical display, as if Cyrano had persuaded the director nothing mattered but *panache*. When Hands is not tarting up the battle scenes with smoke pots, fanfares, and colored gels, or underlining tearful climaxes with a humming male chorus, he is sailing dead leaves down from the flies and moving nuns around in pretty formations. In his death scene, Cyrano waves his white plume and calls for "defunctive music." You may recognize the homage to T. S. Eliot; there are more frequent nods to Shakespeare ("Oh that this too too solid nose would melt"). Like Anthony Burgess's new version, the acting also anglicizes Rostand's text (aside from the usual Oxbridge aristocrats and Cotswold rustics, the Gascons speak in broad Scottish accents). There are well-staged sword fights, movable chandeliers, and lots of bustling crowd scenes. In the unlikely event you've never seen this play, you'll find the production lavish, animated, theatrical; otherwise, you may wonder just what compelled the R.S.C. to refurbish this antique canon for yet another assault on the barricades.

Much Ado About Nothing is distinguished by Ralph Koltai's beautiful setting—a high-tech exterior of transparent and reflective mirrors, decorated with burnished etchings of Japanese trees. At the very beginning a striking female cellist sits on a bench beside the tree and plays some mournful music. It is a lovely moment. Nothing in the production ever matches it. One major difficulty is that the purpose of the setting is never established. One anticipates a new avenue into the play; what one gets is just another pretty decoration, later embellished with revolving balloons and twinkling stars. But where are we? And who are all these people? The costumes seem like seventeenth-century Italian and Spanish adaptations, the period dances are performed with masks and swordplay (a new R.S.C. principle—when in doubt, fence), but nobody has troubled to investigate why Shakespeare set his play in Messina or what may lurk under the surface of the wit contests, horseplay, and melodramatic confrontations.

Again, the performers don't help, for all their elegant speech. Jacobi and Cusack as Benedict and Beatrice bitch at each other sharply but strike no erotic sparks, and Claudio and Hero never display any special reason for wanting to get married. It is a case of actors who clearly prefer to talk than to kiss. The vowels are properly placed and the profiles effectively displayed—but I waited in vain for a single moment of surprise or revelation beneath the polished display of ornament and appearance. Terry Hands lights the set beautifully, however, especially in the autumnal conclusion which turns the stage burnt umber. And it must be said the little concluding dance between the lovers left the audience roaring.

I don't enjoy being severe about productions so admired by critics and spectators, but I can't remove from mind images of Brook's *King Lear* and *Marat/Sade*, Peter Hall's *War of the Roses* cycle, and that great company of forceful, searching R.S.C. actors which included Ian Holm and Paul Rogers and Anthony Howard and Janet Suzman. Trevor Nunn himself was responsible in 1965 for the most penetrating *Henry V* in memory. Under his current leadership, however, a serious falling off must be acknowledged, not just in depth but in the very definition and purpose of the theater. What accounts for this? Perhaps just the pressure of an age which prefers positive thinking to critical investigation, technical expertise to emotional depth, complacent fabrications to truthful revelations, soothing appearances to bleak realities. It is an age in which we are all forced to be tourists vacationing in the past for nostalgic escape, and the theater is fashioning pleasant fantasies to match it.

Reflections of an Eastern European in America.

E.E., The Extra Territorial

By Stanislaw Baranczak

FIRST, there is the optical shock. When the average Eastern European (E.E., for short) steps off a plane on his first visit to the New World, he is immediately struck by the orgy of colors. Of course he had known something about America before; he used to contemplate postcards, listen to travelers' tales, watch American movies. But the reality is much more intensely colorful than Technicolor. E.E. never expected houses to be painted so brightly purple or blue, school buses to be so warmly yellow, street signs to be so invitingly green. The way America is painted seems to him shockingly but pleasantly different from the drab colorlessness that envelops everything—streets, cars, housing projects, peoples' complexions—in his own country. The color of Eastern Europe is grey (with occasional flashes of red on national holidays). America has no single color; it is brightly multicolored, pluralistic, and bold even in the first visual impression it makes.

The very next thing E.E. is struck by is the size of everything. Besides being gaudier, the components of American reality are also bigger. I don't mean the obvious things like skyscrapers, cars, the Grand Canyon, or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. But even the gulls at the beach seem to be somewhat oversized here, as if they had been fed all their lives with some especially nutritious gull food, sold in easy-to-open cans. Speaking of body size, Eastern Europe is no match for America either as far as its fat people are concerned. There are a lot of potbellies there, but their fat is the fat of sloppiness, bad food, and lack of time for exercise. Compared to this, the typical American fatty seems rather to be a kind of competitor who has deliberately set about breaking the world record in body weight. He, or she, somehow

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blends in harmoniously with the Rockies, the Sears Tower, and the Buick station wagon.

One hour on American soil is enough for E.E. to receive a cultural shock in addition to the optical one. Unlike his own country, the U.S.A. strikes him as a place where everything is in working order—well, most of the time. A bus may be late, but it finally does arrive. A book may be out of print, but you can order a copy or expect a new edition fairly soon. The toilet may not flush, but here comes a superintendent and repairs it (at least until the next breakdown). This notion goes far beyond the mere availability of consumer goods and services. It's more than that; it's a philosophical difference between two visions of Fate. E.E. needs, typically, a few months to get rid of his Eastern European fatalism, bred in him by the countless hours he spent in his country hopelessly waiting at a bus stop, hunting for a sold-out book, begging a plumber to pay a visit. In Eastern Europe the best guess is to expect the worst. Nothing is guaranteed or even predictable; everything—from the meat supply to the course of your own career—is subject to the mysterious whims of "them," those who are in power on its various levels (even the plumber is one of "them"—his power lies in his being in constant demand). In America, "them" seems to be replaced by "me": everything—and this is truly a new experience for E.E.—can be worked out, if one tries hard enough. Or at least so it seems to E.E. until he first gets into trouble with the I.R.S. or is caught speeding.

TRUE or not, the acceptance of the idea that everything in America works or can be worked out is perhaps the watershed moment for an Eastern European newcomer. Having gotten used to this, he becomes a new man. That is, to a certain extent; there are still some residues of his old mentality which simply cannot be eradicated. In spite of all his euphoria, the New World sometimes also provokes feelings of cultural alienation, incomprehension, or disgust. Here is a partial list of things American with which E.E. will never come to terms:

1. Barbara Walters.
2. Supermarket bread.
3. Stand-up parties.
4. Baseball.
5. Small talk.
6. Dental bills.
7. Muzak.
8. Decaffeinated coffee.
9. Catfood commercials.
10. Being addressed on a first-name basis by strangers.

The list could be easily extended, but I hope its point is clear. Mind you, not all of the things listed above are perceived by E.E. as alien. Though this is certainly the case with baseball, which seems to him to have brutally usurped the place of soccer, that one truly noble and intelligent game. Some other things seem illogical rather than alien. What's the point of standing at parties and wearing out your legs? Or what's the sense in drinking coffee that's not coffee at all? Still others remain alien, but on second thought E.E. has to grudgingly admit their logicality; the cost of filling a cavity is outrageous, but the operation is painless and well done, which cannot usually be said, after all, about dental care in his own country. On the other hand, Barbara Walters, for instance, provokes in E.E. some definitely bad vibrations, precisely because she reminds him so much of the superficiality and the pretentious blah-blah of Eastern Europe's own TV anchors; and certain TV commercials (those of the "no-more-ring-around-the-collar" or "you'll-never-go-back-to-thick" variety), while basically unknown as a genre in the Communist bloc, have too much in common with the general mindlessness and bad taste of what is a surrogate for mass culture there.

America is indeed a land of opportunity, at least in the sense that there is always the opportunity here to escape from what you hate or to balance it with what you like. If you can't stand standing at parties, you can always sit down, even on the floor. If you hate Johnny Carson, you can watch Ted Koppel. It doesn't mean, though, that the cultural differences can be smoothed over easily. If E.E. happens to be a translator of literature, as in the case of this writer, he cannot help thinking about this dilemma as a problem of translation from one language into another. There would be no problem at all—and the translator's profession would not exist—if every word or expression in a given language had an exact equivalent in another language. But sometimes a word has several different equivalents, or a group of synonymous words has only a single equivalent. It can also happen that there is no equivalent at all, since the thing noted by a word simply doesn't exist in another environment or culture. And finally there are also situations—the most difficult ones for the translator—in which there *seems* to exist a pair of exact equivalents, but in fact each of them means something quite different in its respective languages, or their meanings overlap only partially.

WHAT I mean by "language" here can be broadly understood as any established cultural system, but in the particular situation of E.E. in America the problem is most nagging, naturally, within language in its narrow sense. A visitor or immigrant in a foreign country is sensitive, as a rule, to the pitfalls of semantics; the necessity of communicating in a language that is not his own makes him painfully aware of the constant danger of being misunderstood due to his linguistic imprecision or erratic usage. But sometimes it is not his poor vocabulary that is to blame—it is, rather, this or that built-in incompatibility of two languages. And such instances make him think, in turn, of all the potential and actual misunderstandings on a more universal level—in the communication that goes on between nations, cultures, and political blocs.

Take the word "happy," perhaps one of the most frequent words in Basic American. It's easy to open an English-Polish or English-Russian dictionary and find an equivalent adjective. In fact, however, it will not be equivalent. The Polish word for "happy" (and I believe this also holds for other Slavic languages) has a much more restricted meaning; it is generally reserved for rare states of profound bliss, or total satisfaction with serious things such as love, family, the meaning of life, and so on. Accordingly, it is not used as often as "happy" is in American common parlance. The question one hears at (stand-up) parties, "Is everybody happy?" if translated literally into Polish, would seem to come from a metaphysical treatise or a political utopia rather than from social chit-chat. Incidentally, it is also interesting that Slavic languages don't have an exact equivalent for the verb "to enjoy." I don't mean to say that Americans are a nation of superficial, backslapping enjoyers and happy-makers, as opposed to our suffering Slavic souls. What I'm trying to

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point out is only one example of semantic incompatibilities which are so firmly ingrained in languages and cultures that they sometimes make mutual communication impossible—or, rather, they turn it into a ritual exchange of meaningless grunts and purrs. "Are you happy?" E.E. is asked by his cordial host. "Yes, I am." "Are you enjoying yourself?" "Sure I am." What else can be said? What would be the point in trying to explain that his Eastern European mind does not necessarily mean what his American vocabulary communicates?

BUT THIS is just an innocent example from the field of private emotions and the level of individual dialogue. The weight of the problem increases remarkably whenever E.E. has to resort to the vocabulary of what really matters on the nation-to-nation plane—to the vocabulary of history, politics, and ideology. Take another word: "liberal." In my part of Europe this single word has several meanings at least. As a qualifying adjective added to the name of this or that political tendency, for instance, it means that someone belongs, within his own political camp, to the doves rather than to the hawks. Thus, a "liberal Communist" is the kind of Communist who would like to send only some of his country's dissidents to psychiatric hospitals. This is, however, a secondary and frequently ironic usage. In its primary sense, the word "liberal" denotes in Eastern Europe, just as it does traditionally in all of Europe, someone who is located rather toward the center of the political spectrum and who opposes, most of all, those ideological premises of both the left and the right which in his view threaten the principle of individual freedom. Now what is an Eastern European liberal supposed to say when he is asked by an American acquaintance about his political orientation? To answer "I'm a liberal" would mean to risk a fundamental misunderstanding. The answer "I'm a neoconservative" would more or less transfer the desired meaning to the American ears, but E.E. cannot force his lips to pronounce that; "conservative" sounds like the opposite of what he has always considered himself. After all, in his own country he never wanted to "conserve" the status quo—on the contrary, as a dissident, defender of human rights, or just a thinking individual he was definitely "progressive" as opposed to the "conservative" powers-that-be. The translation from the language EE (Eastern European) into the language AA (Authentic American) is, at least in this particular case, virtually impossible; even though the word "liberal" has the same Latin root and a similar sound here and there, its actual meanings within two different political systems, societies, and historical traditions are far from close.

THIS IS precisely what I would call the continental drift of meanings. The word "liberal," to which other words, such as "democratic," "nationalistic," etc., could be added, is just one of the more glaring examples of that phenomenon. In fact, the most basic premises of life in Eastern Europe are so different from the American way of life (whatever that means) that every attempt at mutually communicating one's experience is bound to wind up in semantic conundrums and misinterpretations. This wouldn't be surprising if we dealt with an Eastern European apparatchik coming to America on an official visit; surely enough, in his peculiar newspeak, words like "democracy" and "justice" mean something rather different than they do in the Declaration of Independence. But an Eastern European dissident usually believes that, given a chance, he would be able to communicate with the heirs of Thomas Jefferson without lapsing into semantic confusion. The reality, as a rule, thwarts his expectations; despite all the mutual sympathy on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the continental drift in semantics seems to be unstoppable. Nothing could be a better example of this than the American media's coverage of events in Poland over the past four years. Their attempts to "translate" the idiomatically Polish set of political and social meanings into a language understandable to the American audience ended up, for the most part, in a failure to communicate anything essential. The gulf between two social systems, two historical traditions, and two collective mentalities proved to be too wide to be bridged by sympathy alone.

Still, just as the differences between two ethnic languages create the need for translators, so all the incompatibilities between the Eastern European and American mentalities only make every form of semantic mediation all the more desirable. Personally, I believe in cul-

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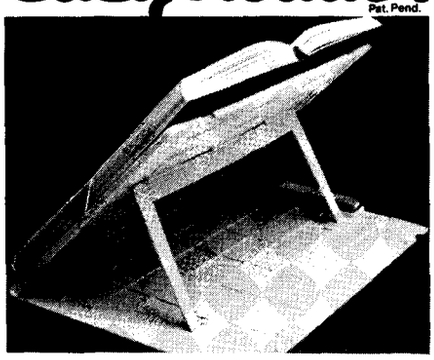

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ture as a possible go-between. A single novel of, say, Milan Kundera or Tadeusz Konwicki, when translated into English, tells the American audience more about Czechoslovakia or Poland than ten years of *Newsweek*'s coverage. A single film of Andrzej Wajda's is an incomparably better source of information about Eastern Europe than a thousand interviews with General Jaruzelski by Barbara Walters. A general can lie; a work of art can't. If you want to know why 10 million unarmed people in an Eastern European country risked being crushed by Soviet tanks four years ago, don't ask party secretaries. Ask poets and artists.

In fact, Americans do just that more and more often, but a lot remains to be done. It's characteristic that in a country like Poland, despite all the officially sponsored propaganda against the U.S.A., there has always been a powerful interest in American culture and, as a consequence, it is amazingly well known there. If America wishes to understand better what's going on with today's world, it's time for her to abandon the idea of cultural self-sufficiency and to reach deeper into other nations' minds. The widening gulf between collective mentalities has more than once been crossed in the past and it still can be bridged by the kind of insight that culture provides. The continental drift can be stopped.

MORAL MINEFIELDS

Ordinary Vices
by Judith N. Shklar

(Harvard University Press, 280 pp., $16.50)

Academic thinking about social issues was greatly livened up in the last decade, thanks to the abandonment by moral and political philosophers of the intensely ascetic restraints imposed by an austere formalism. The principles of conduct and judgment in morals and politics were no longer to be viewed as expressions of purely personal conviction or commitment. The unusually warm ideological temperature of the late '60s and early '70s brought some welcome new varieties into bloom—for example, Thomas Nagel's *Mortal Questions*, Peter Singer's *Practical Ethics*, his and Stephen Clark's books on our treatment of animals, Jonathan Glover's on life and death and genetic engineering and, immersed even more deeply in the current of actual practices and policies, Sissela Bok's admirably concrete and detailed *Lying* and *Secrets*.

The appearance of a book called *Ordinary Vices* by Judith Shklar, a political philosopher at Harvard, promised to be a further contribution to the business of reoccupying the no man's land between the abstract logical analysis of moral and political discourse on the one side and straightforward polemical advocacy on the other. Although it is part of the general phenomenon mentioned, however, it is also something much more wayward and idiosyncratic. Shklar takes five vices, sketches their varieties, illustrates their concrete realization and practical consequences with the help of a broad range of imaginative writings, and considers their role in politics as characteristics of rulers and of those they rule. The humanitarian conclusion she finally draws is that it is more important to condemn and to resist cruelty than to attack lying and insincerity. Not a very challenging conclusion, perhaps, but worth affirming against various sorts of post-Nietzschean moral idiots. Anyway, the real merit of the undertaking would consist in the details of the journey to this comparatively modest destination.

In fact, Shklar denies having a destination at all; she describes herself as taking "a ramble through a moral minefield"—a phrase, incidentally, that is fairly typical of her general tendency toward melodrama. Shklar can be joined on her minefield ramble without serious danger to anyone involved—except the danger to her of being deceived into identifying muddle with profundity, and the danger to her readers of anxious puzzlement about how the interesting things she often has to say add up or are connected to each other.

In a retrospective comment in her last chapter, Shklar says she has not been writing intellectual history, or analytic political theory, or the highly abstract sort of moral philosophy often called meta-ethics. In her introduction she remarks that what she is about to present "may not be philosophy in any exact way." Now there are two ways of abstaining from philosophy, even from exact philosophy. The narrowly analytical philosophy of recent times has avoided as a matter of principle the large, serious kind of moral issues with which she deals. Notoriously, the moral problems it considers are trivial—for example, Is it morally adequate to mail a book one has promised to return to its owner rather than, presumably, to hand it over to him in person? But there is a larger interpretation of the word "philosophy" which cannot be put aside so profitably. It is exemplified in the works of Plato and Aristotle, and consists in the precise and explicit formulation of theses, and in rigorous and explicit argument. Shklar's failure to follow either of these methods reduces her book to an enigmatic, occasionally stimulating miscellany.

For a start, her basic list of vices is doubly unsatisfactory. First, it is not really a list of vices. Betrayal, for example, is not a quality of character; it is a species of action. If she had followed her acknowledged mentor, Montaigne, more closely and written of disloyalty instead, she would have preserved the coherence of her list. Cruelty, hypocrisy, and disloyalty are indeed vices, although hypocrisy is less morally objectionable than other species of dishonesty. But snobbery and misanthropy, although unattractive qualities of character, are hardly vices at all, unless they are accompanied by the humiliation of others or by active malevolence toward them (which need not be the case).

Secondly, the list is made to appear wholly arbitrary, indeed whimsical, since it is not related to any general scheme or system of vices and virtues. We have no idea what field its members have been selected from, or with what they are to be compared. This difficulty is compounded by the very loose accounts Shklar gives of the vices under examination when she comes to consider them one by one. She does make a glancing reference to the traditional set of the deadly sins, which emphasizes, she says, pride and self-indulgence. Pride, certainly, is one of them. Glut-

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tony and lust are plainly forms of self-indulgence. Sloth could be held to be a sort of self-indulgence, perhaps; but surely not anger and envy.

"Putting cruelty first" is a leading theme of the book, so that is where cruelty may properly be considered. She defines it in purely physical terms as "the willful inflicting of physical pain on a weaker being in order to cause anguish and fear." The torturer who actually inflicts the pain is not the primary agent of cruelty, but the person who set him to work; and he may not be cruel at all, although he is obviously likely to be if he is a professional torturer since constant exposure to intense human suffering makes one insensitive to it. Anyway, the inflicting of pain is not a vice, but a wicked act. The vice of cruelty is the willingness to inflict pain for ends other than the advantage of the sufferer or, alternatively, the indifference to bringing about the suffering of others in pursuit of one's own ends.

PHYSICAL cruelty is a defect that most people, outside childhood or war, have little opportunity to exercise. De Maistre's *bourreau* and Weber's definition of government as the monopoly of legitimate violence remind us of Shklar's point that war and punishment are the primary business of government. Orderly government minimizes the opportunities for private cruelty by nationalizing it. In practice, governments can maintain order without actual violence, so long as their potential for using it remains credible. Arrested men go quietly; sentenced men walk down to their cells without flailing away at the court attendants. It is only because of the inefficiency of our penal arrangements that they then experience the unjust additional punishment of being cruelly beaten and sodomized by their fellow prison-dwellers.

Given the intensity of obedience demanded of their citizens by the modern prison-states of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, cruelty is fully exploited by the apparatus of terror. But a dissenter could be overpowered painlessly by the K.G.B. and packed off to die slowly of hunger, cold, and medical neglect in the Arctic without ever being beaten or tortured. At the end of her chapter on cruelty Shklar acknowledges the existence of what she calls moral cruelty and defines as "deliberate and persistent humiliation." This is the speciality of private life; governments use it only in show trials. But she makes no provision, in attaching the importance she does to cruelty, for the vast amount of human suffering that governments and private individuals deliberately and indifferently bring about without being cruel in her sense.

A broader imperceptiveness is shown in her account of Christianity's lack of concern with cruelty. She says it is because cruelty is a crime against man, not against God. Why should Christianity be so hostile to killing, then, or indeed to sodomy and to bestiality? The reason for Christian indifference, rather, is Christian disdain for the body and distaste for its pleasures. Finally, Shklar cites from time to time the old schoolstory axiom about cruelty: all bullies are cowards. But that proposition *must* be false. Consider the German Army, without question the bravest, the least easily defeated in the Western world; and alongside its glories in heroic defeat are its unmatched record of battle dishonors, from Louvain to Malmédy. It was second to none in courage, and in the killing and brutalizing of civilian hostages and prisoners.

SHKLAR'S other chosen vices can be dealt with more rapidly. Hypocrisy is a vice, of course. As the false pretense of virtue or piety, it is a kind of lying. Still, it seems a comparatively unimportant one. It fraudulently extracts from its victims only their respect, not their life savings. Since we are not very anxious about the proper distribution of our respect, as compared with the protection of our savings, we are usually calm enough about the matter to be able to detect it. It saturates ordinary life through the practices of common civility. As Rochefoucauld saw in calling it a tribute, it is a ritual gesture of respect to the ideal. No doubt there is a good deal of it about in liberal democratic polities. That is not a reason for preferring the total mendacity of totalitarianism, as Shklar agrees; but her choice of hypocrisy as an alternative to cruelty as the worst of vices is weird. Moreover, Shklar's point that we should not be horrified by hypocrisy, particularly in public life, which is a matter of compromise, rhetoric, and negotiation, is pushing at a door that is almost wide open.

Snobbery, the overvaluation of trivial differences between people, need not be a vice at all. It may be no more than a silly weakness. Some of the most virtuous, kindly, and honorable people I

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know are snobs in the most primordial sense, dragging in their acquaintance with or relatedness to socially elevated personages at every conceivable opportunity. Shklar manages to sustain it as a vice only by taking it always to involve the humiliation and exclusion of those the snob considers his inferiors. She tentatively links it to racism, too, but does not try to make anything of the alleged connection.

Like snobbery, misanthropy is not necessarily vicious. Are all hermits wicked? What is wrong with recognizing the moral limitations of human beings, or the fact that we do not live up to the principles of conduct we profess? Etymologically the word implies hatred of mankind; and that is unattractive. Shklar gives evidence of suffering from misanthropy when she says, in one of her moments of melodrama, that "most moral psychology of any worth is a scream of disgust." Surely it is possible to be more sensible than that without lapsing into fantasies about the natural goodness of mankind. It is an indication of at least a measure of general human good sense that *Gulliver's Travels*, perhaps the greatest literary scream of disgust, is generally treated as a story for children. Undiscriminating hatred of mankind, if it remains contemplative, if it reveals itself in nothing more than surliness and withdrawal, is foolish, but it is not notably wicked. Only if it turns into a desire to harm others (as it very well may) does it become truly vicious. But then it is no longer misanthropy; it is malevolence, which is another thing.

THESE vigorous objections to the architecture of Judith Shklar's book do not extend to the materials of which it is composed. She says much that is interesting about her principal witnesses—Montaigne and Montesquieu (good), Machiavelli and Nietzsche (bad)—and, on a smaller scale, about Tudor and Jacobean drama, Molière, La Bruyère, Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Howells, and Henry James. And she makes many good points along the way—for example, that in opposing cruelty we should not overpraise its victims (the topic of an essay by Bertrand Russell on the superior virtue of the oppressed). She is perceptive about the snobbish cult of Europe in the old American ruling class, and entertainingly specific about the forms it takes in its revival in the present day in the upper reaches of the academic world. She observes that the Germans were able to get over their dedication to Hitler by the recognition that he had betrayed them, that in the end he saw them simply as raw materials of a dispensable sort for his political work of art. And a very good point indeed, unfortunately not developed, is that the word "masses" is an intrinsically misanthropic term.

The long slumber of political philosophy between the First World War and its recent revival was due in large part to the light that war threw on the dominant school of idealist political thinkers of the period before 1914; the work of the Bosanquets, the Ernest Barkers, and the like was shown to be the merely edifying waffle it was. And the substantive political theory that has been practiced in the last decade or so takes full account of the more exigent intellectual standards imposed in the lean years. It cannot profit from their abandonment, and from a meandering, aimlessly literary treatment of things which are really much too important to be trifled with.

ANTHONY QUINTON

Anthony Quinton is president of Trinity College, Oxford.

FACTS UNDER FIRE

Double Vision: How the Press Distorts America's View of the Middle East by Ze'ev Chafets

(Morrow, 349 pp., $16.95)

When the United States withdrew from Vietnam a decade ago, the press corps that covered the war so thoroughly also got out. The war went on as savagely as ever, but it no longer flickered across our living rooms. It wasn't that the press decided that the violence in Indochina was no longer newsworthy. Reporters were simply barred from being there. Nothing in international law requires nations to allow foreign journalists to cover their wars. Most countries, democratic or not, simply shut the doors. During the Falklands war, for example, the British government restricted press coverage as thoroughly as any totalitarian regime.

Since 1973 the Arab-Israeli conflict has become one of the Western media's primary news beats. But the logistics of how the big story is covered are, once again, extremely lopsided. Several hundred foreign correspondents reside in and report from the Middle East, but more than 80 percent of them are in tiny Israel. The handful of reporters who do cover the Arab world on a regular basis are almost all clustered in two capitals—Beirut and Cairo. Throughout most of the vast Muslim Middle East, a resident foreign correspondent is as rare a sight as snow.

When the simmering Arab-Israeli conflict breaks out into full-scale war, moreover, the situation becomes even more lopsided. The reserve battalions of old war-hands, freelance journalists, and famous authors fly straight to Tel Aviv, not to Damascus or Cairo. They know that Israel is a reporter's paradise. In a recent documentary on the foreign press corps aired on Israel's government-owned TV network, a top foreign correspondent explained why Israel was now considered such a plum assignment. First, he said, Israel offers the necessary amenities—good schools for the kids; English spoken by almost everyone a reporter might wish to speak to; a thriving cultural and recreational life. Second, Israel is an open society. It has an assertive, muckraking press of its own and it offers unlimited access to government officials. Finally, the hot stories that thereby fall into the lap of a foreign reporter are likely to make the front page.

Reporters on the other side of the battle lines are less likely to speak publicly about the subject, but it's no secret that they work under the most intimidating restraints. Some Arab countries do not even permit foreign news organizations to set up bureaus. Others, such as Syr-

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ia, make it so difficult for a reporter to do any genuine journalistic labor that there is no point in stationing a permanent correspondent there.

They also shoot reporters in the Arab world even more frequently than they shoot political leaders who try to make peace with Israel. Any reporter who worked in Lebanon since the civil war of 1975-76 had his mind powerfully concentrated by the long list of colleagues who were assassinated, shot at, assaulted, or merely driven out of the country by threats. (Among those killed: Yousef el Sabai, the editor of the Egyptian daily *Al Ahram*, by a radical faction of the P.L.O., for writing "good things about Israel"; Salim Lawzi, a moderate Lebanese journalist, probably by the Syrians; ABC correspondent Sean Toolan, by "unknown" assailants; Robert Pfeffer, a writer for *Stern* magazine, while researching an article on ties between the P.L.O. and European left-wing terrorist groups.)

IT IS certainly not the fault of the foreign correspondents themselves that there is this enormous gap between what they can do in Israel and in any Arab country. Nor does the press owe Israel any favors, in the form of pulling its punches. Still, the news media may well be faulted for not acknowledging the gap and not making its readers and listeners constantly aware of it. Conscientious journalists should reveal as much as possible about the conditions under which they work, particularly when those conditions affect any understanding readers may have of the behavior of the parties to a conflict.

Such disclosure requires, for example, that a dispatch from Israel which has been altered by the military censor be labeled as such. Most news organizations do so. But what of the censorship by exclusion practiced throughout much of the Arab world? How do you label that? And what of the even more pernicious form of self-censorship that reporters impose on themselves because of their (quite legitimate) fear of retaliation by an Arab government, a sectarian militia, a terrorist organization?

It is one of Ze'ev Chafets's contentions in this important and revealing book that much of the press has failed this test of disclosure. Indeed, he charges that important Western news organizations have often covered up the extent to which the physical intimidation of their reporters, and the Arab policies of exclusion, have affected the news transmitted from the Middle East. "Self-censorship pollutes the flow of information," he writes,

> and it is compounded when news organizations hide the truth about the conditions under which their journalists are forced to work, thus preventing the public from making an informed assessment of the limitations and reliability of the reporting from and about the region.

THE American-born Chafets was formerly director of Israel's Government Press Office, and many of the incidents he cites as cases-in-point first came to his attention through the foreign correspondents' grapevine in Jerusalem. He heard stories about reporters being shot, or issued death threats, or otherwise intimidated in Beirut. He would then notice that some of the major news organizations seemed to take a vow of *omerta* about the violence being done to their own employees. For example, *Time* correspondent William Marmon was threatened with death because he was considered "pro-Israel" and had to be pulled out of Beirut, but the magazine failed to mention it until six years after the incident.

Chafets also came to the reasonable conclusion that the intimidation of journalists in Beirut "was working to Israel's detriment." One disturbing series of events involving ABC struck him as much more than coincidental. In April 1981 ABC did a documentary on P.L.O. terrorism, reported by Geraldo Rivera. Both Rivera and his producer, Barbara Newman, were then warned never to come back to Beirut. Shortly after the program was aired ABC's Jerry King, who had introduced Rivera to a top P.L.O. functionary and had vouched for him, also was transferred out of Beirut. (King claims his departure was coincidental.) A few weeks later ABC radio reporter Sean Toolan was murdered in Beirut by "unknown assailants."

The ABC productions on the Middle East that followed raised real questions as to whether the network was trying to make amends with the P.L.O. First there was an invitation to Yasir Arafat to appear on *Issues and Answers*, where he was thrown softball questions by two ABC reporters. Then there was a two-part series that absolved the P.L.O. of practicing terrorism. It began by announcing that "terrorism as Palestinian policy has been replaced by main-

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stream, high-powered politics." Finally ABC produced a documentary on the West Bank occupation which accused the Israelis of infanticide, without even allowing an Israeli spokesman to reply.

Chafets also dwells at length on another incident involving the P.L.O. and the press in Lebanon, which seems to him to reflect the "double vision" by which the media establishes one set of rules for itself in Israel and another in Arab countries. In May 1981 William Farrell and John Kifner of *The New York Times*, Jonathan Randal of *The Washington Post*, Julian Nundy of *Newsweek*, and an Associated Press photographer headed down the coastal road from Beirut to check out a rumor that an Israeli raid was taking place. A few miles outside the capital their car was stopped by an armed group from a pro-Syrian faction of the P.L.O. The reporters showed valid press credentials, but they were hauled to a makeshift jail and deposited in individual "coffin-like" cells. They were interrogated and held for fifteen hours. Two of the reporters later said that they feared for their lives. When they were released, the reporters made an agreement that they would not write about the incident.

No one did write about it. Chafets heard about it later through his contacts in Jerusalem. He cited the incident as one example to substantiate his charge of cover-up in an interview he gave in February 1982 to the *Times* Jerusalem bureau chief, David Shipler. To his credit, Shipler filed a story quoting all of Chafets's charges, including the story of the abduction of the four reporters on the coastal road. The story appeared as Shipler had written it in the *International Herald Tribune* on February 10. Everything that happened next seemed to confirm exactly what Chafets was saying. The *Times* held Shipler's story for four more days and then ran it in an expurgated version. It included Chafets's charges of intimidation of reporters from other news organizations, but it omitted entirely the coastal road incident involving two of its own reporters. As far as the U.S. media was concerned, the P.L.O.'s abduction at gunpoint of four prominent American correspondents was still not a story. (Imagine the reaction if anything similar had occurred in Israel.)

Chafets counterattacked by offering the story of the coastal road incident, plus the *Times* excision, to the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*. Both papers refused. Finally a reporter for *The Chicago Tribune* took the story and it was published. The *Times* now had to comment. It ran a short item noting Chafets's charges and quoted its foreign editor, Craig Whitney, in a contorted response: "It is the policy of the *Times* to report difficulties encountered by its correspondents in the course of reporting only if the difficulties themselves become news, and we did not consider this such a case, then or now."

By the *Times* official standard, then, if one of its reporters gets abducted at gunpoint, and if he is held for fifteen hours, it's a "difficulty." Furthermore, this "difficulty" isn't news, because . . . well, because it isn't news. As Chafets reminds us, when a *Times* correspondent crossing into Israel from Jordan was questioned for five hours by Israeli border police, that difficulty was reported on and published by the *Times*.

At *The Washington Post* the line was that Chafets's charges were a tempest in a teapot. The paper maintained a blackout on the coastal road story and the subsequent controversy for another month. The blackout probably would have continued, except for the needling the *Post* was getting from the editor-in-chief of this magazine. Finally the *Post* deigned to reply in the form of an Op-Ed page article by Jim Hoagland, the paper's foreign editor and the person responsible for the blackout in the first place. According to Hoagland what had happened to the four reporters was no big deal. Perhaps his reporter, Jonathan Randal, should have written about it, but the suggestion that decisions about what is reported from Lebanon are affected by fear or bias, said Hoagland, is ridiculous. Randal was a reporter of integrity and physical courage.

NO DOUBT people at the *Post* will protest that Chafets's emphasis on this and similar incidents is still much ado about nothing, that what is at issue is not the intimidation of reporters, or any "double vision," but simply giving the Palestinians a fair shake. I disagree. It seems to me that by studying such incidents Chafets establishes the rudiments of a sociology of foreign reporting in the Middle East, which relates the conditions of journalism to its results. I do not think it is merely coincidental, for example, that the same Jonathan Randal who declined to report on the abduction of four reporters by the P.L.O. later wrote a book called *Going All The Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers, and The War in Lebanon*—a title which accurately reflects the book's whitewashing of the P.L.O.'s role in the destruction of Lebanon. Nor do I think that the many incidents of intimidation, and of the press's accommodations to it, are unconnected to the fact that we had to wait for *The New York Times* Jerusalem correspondent, David Shipler, to go to Southern Lebanon after the Israeli invasion to get an account of the reign of terror and tyranny perpetrated by the P.L.O. in that region.

Similarly, Chafets effectively establishes connections between the policy of press exclusion practiced by most of

THE GHOST

I held my breath for years,
for fear of being breathless,
fear of being afraid.
Whenever someone left my bed

I took a deeper one. Addicted
to the flesh, attracted
to the very quick, I thought
I'd never let them go—my child,

my man, a little red. But lately,
in the winter stoneyards, when the still heaps
hold their blue, and a hand is all
wool thumbs, and no one

says hello, or
hello's other half,
and stars, above all, after all,
strike fire from the lapidary slope,

then something rises out of me at last,
my hope and heat, the spirit I had
hidden most. Because we have to give up
everything of love—even the ghost.

HEATHER MCHUGH

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the Arab governments and certain anti-Israel biases. He reminds us that before the Israeli siege of Beirut and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, there were two massacres in the Syrian city of Hama. The first was a relatively minor atrocity. In April 1982 President Assad's security forces moved into the city, rounded up about 350 young people suspected of being members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and executed them on the spot. The second Hama massacre occurred in February 1982. The Syrian Army simply leveled the "rebellious" city and killed an estimated 20,000 civilians. There were no reporters around during the two-week assault of the city. Some reports of the massacre did filter through to the Beirut press corps and a few cursory articles were published. A month later Thomas Friedman of the *Times* did manage to get to the ruined city and wrote a powerful story. But, as Chafets shows, most of the media simply gave up. Out of sight, out of mind. Thus NBC's John Chancellor could go on camera during the siege of Beirut (he got to the city courtesy of the Israeli Army, of course) and compare the Israelis to Nazis, and then announce, in all apparent sincerity, that "Nothing like it has ever happened in this part of the world."

THIS book reminds us that far, far worse often happens in the Middle East, but that the skewed conditions of reporting in the region lead some people to focus inordinately on Israel's derelictions. Chafets's critics are likely to say that this is special pleading from a former spokesman for the Begin government. But I would suggest a simple test of his thesis. Take a look at the daily coverage of the conflict as you read this book. And in the meantime, whet your appetite on these few items from the press that I noticed after I received this book from its publisher.

—On September 21 the "CBS Evening News" reported that its correspondent in Israel had been excluded from a press tour of Southern Lebanon conducted by the Israeli Army, apparently in retaliation for a previous CBS report on morale problems in the army that the Israelis found to be biased and distorted. Dan Rather reported that the network's president, Edward Joyce, had written directly to Prime Minister Peres to protest this "unwarranted exclusion" which "violates your own democratic principles." This one-day exclusion from a war zone was thus given more attention than two recent kidnappings of journalists in Lebanon. It also merited the Israeli government more prime time criticism from CBS than Saudi Arabia has ever received for its policy of total exclusion of resident reporters.

—On September 29 *The Washington Post* carried a front page dispatch by Loren Jenkins on the revival of the P.L.O. in the Beirut refugee camps. This was real déjà vu. Jenkins had distinguished himself as one of the most fervent apologists for the P.L.O. in Lebanon up to the Israeli invasion in 1982. In reflections on the Palestinian issue for *Rolling Stone*, he gave the standard P.L.O. version of the creation of the Jewish state and compared the Israelis to Nazis. Now he was back in the camps again, commiserating with the "guerrillas" of Al Fatah who had just lost one of their commanders. The dead "guerrilla" had led a raiding party apparently trying to get into Israel when it was intercepted at sea. Based on all of Fatah's past actions, we can only assume that had the group penetrated into Israel they would have been shooting or throwing bombs at unarmed civilians and children. Yet the reporter who likened the Israelis to Nazis couldn't get himself to pronounce even once the word terrorist in describing the subject of his story.

—On October 7 *The New York Times Magazine* carried a thoughtful article by Thomas Friedman, its new Jerusalem bureau chief and former Lebanon correspondent, on the frightening rise of fanaticism—in Israel and the Arab world. As an example of accommodation to extremism in Israel, Friedman cited an important "battle over language" in the Israeli media: how to describe the Jews arrested earlier in the year for alleged acts of terrorism against West Bank Arabs. Though the press initially referred to the defendants as "Jewish terrorists," Friedman noted, their supporters were insisting on the designation, "Jewish underground," and sadly, that less condemnatory term seemed to be gaining currency.

Surprisingly, for someone interested in the accommodation to extremism through choice of words, Friedman never mentioned another "battle over language" in Lebanon. That one was over how to describe an organization that sends its members on missions to slaughter schoolchildren. It's a battle that Friedman and his colleagues lost without putting up much of a struggle. So now Loren Jenkins's preferred term, "guerrillas," is the common currency of

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most of the media. Isn't this as good an example of a surrender to the extremists as the one cited by Friedman?

What is going on here is at least a double standard. In fact Ze'ev Chafets is right in calling it a "*double* double standard." That is, Israel is not only subjected to more intense scrutiny and higher expectations than its neighbors; it is held to an even more exacting standard than virtually any other democracy at war.

SOL STERN

Sol Stern, a regular contributor to *The Village Voice*, has written about the Middle East for many other magazines.

MASTERS AND SLAVES

Slavery and Human Progress by David Brion Davis

(Oxford University Press, 374 pp., $25)

Our modern world suffers from a strange schizophrenia. On the one hand we like to celebrate the progress we have made over previous generations; on the other, we remain haunted by a sneaking fear that ancient shackles have not so much been permanently destroyed as replaced by new ones. David Brion Davis's disturbing new book, *Slavery and Human Progress*, perfectly captures the malaise that plagues our most sensitive social critics, even if it does not do much to dissipate it.

Davis has long since established himself as our premier historian of the intellectual history of slavery in Western culture. The pioneering first volume of his projected three-volume work, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, traced the vicissitudes of the idea of slavery from ancient times until the mid-eighteenth century, and effectively set the stage for his brilliant second volume, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823*. The third volume, devoted to the movements for abolition and their opponents during the nineteenth century, is due to be published soon. Davis describes *Slavery and Human Progress* as "transitional," presumably between the second and third volumes of his trilogy. And it is. Yet it is less a transition between two periods in the history of the problem of slavery than an evolution in Davis's own thinking about the subject.

The book is primarily a study of paradoxes, or ironies; it is itself, however, something of a paradox as well. Although most of its pages are devoted to a clear account of slavery from ancient Judea until modern times, the book does not primarily offer new historical research, nor even present a coherent historical narrative. The heart of the book lies in a series of meditations on how to write the history of slavery and its abolition and, above all, how to form any value judgments or draw any lessons from that history. Davis seems to be concerned above all to reflect on slavery as a perennial aspect of the human condition, and on the illusion of progress that has led humans, at least since the eighteenth century, to believe that they are making a better world. Davis, although he does not state this clearly, appears to be questioning the belief that slavery as a specific institution is the incarnation of evil—the very antithesis of that autonomous individualism from which all bourgeois values derived. Even more, he appears to be questioning the implicit corollary of that belief, namely that to abolish slavery as an institution would be to eradicate evil. Davis himself views slavery as no less evil, but as far more protean, far more difficult to confine to a specific institution, and hence far more difficult to abolish.

Davis's doubts about our ability radically to uproot evil from our world have apparently led him away from the historical materialism of his second volume. If he still rigorously insists upon our responsibility to identify the precise socioeconomic conditions of every incidence of slavery as an institution, he also suggests that there is something about slavery that even historical materialism cannot fully apprehend. Social science, he appears to be saying, fails to capture the subtleties of human experience as a manifestation of the human spirit and psyche. And slavery cannot be understood by those who arbitrarily sever it from its roots in the human condition. We can no longer even try to write the history of slavery, or so he seems to be suggesting, without attempting to take account of our own ideological—our moral, intellectual, and political—biases. Nor can we really hope to rise above them.

These doubts structure the history that takes up most of the pages in this book. Davis has divided his work into two parts, respectively entitled "How 'Progress' Led to the Europeans' Enslavement of Africans" and "Redeeming Christianity's Reputation." In the first, he reviews diverse incidences of slavery from the ancient world to the beginnings of the expansion of Europe and the massive enslavement of Africans for labor on New World plantations in the early modern period. In the second, he reviews themes in the history of abolition from the eighteenth century until our own day, although he focuses primarily on England and North America with some attention to France and passing glances at Spain, Cuba, and Brazil. In both parts, he considers topics that illustrate the theoretical, philosophical, and moral concerns that engage his attention.

THE first part in fact eschews chronological narrative entirely. The opening chapter describes a full-scale black slave revolt in the Fertile Crescent in the middle of the ninth century. The revolt is of great intrinsic interest, but the point of placing it at the beginning of the book is to demonstrate that black slavery for productive (rather than domestic) purposes cannot be viewed simply as the product of European colonialism. The remainder of this part demonstrates through selected vignettes that Jews, like all other peoples, held and traded slaves; that race emerged as a symbol of enslavement in pre-expansion Islamic slavery; and that ancient slavery manifested many of the discrete features that historians have tried to associate with modern slavery. So far, so good. Since recorded time, humans have been prone to indulge in all the unpalatable forms of domination that historians have traditionally seen as coming together in the European enslavement of Africans, the paradigm of

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slavery against which the abolitionists reacted. But then, as if to undercut this unconventional reading of slavery as potentially a universal manifestation of human wickedness, Davis concludes with a review of the massive and unprecedented enslavement of Africans that accompanied European expansion overseas.

DAVIS'S discrete discussions of different cases of slavery are in fact illustrations of the theoretical discussion of the problems of defining slavery and comparing various slave systems which he undertakes in the principal chapter in the first section. Here Davis effectively presents two perspectives on the study of slavery: the existential and the sociological. Where he had emphasized the sociological in his earlier work, he now seems more drawn to the existential, and effectively argues that the more we know about slavery, the more trouble we have in defining it. In his view the mountains of recent scholarship, including his own, have failed to generate a convincing general theory of slavery. Here his discussion of the problem of a theory of slavery reveals him to have been much influenced by psychoanalysis and much impressed, if not entirely converted, by Orlando Patterson's recent and controversial tour de force, *Slavery and Social Death*. For Patterson, all slavery must be recognized as preeminently a form of social death, a ritual and symbolic dishonor that not even manumission could erase. Slavery thus becomes the ultimate form of not-belonging, of humiliating rootlessness, of mere existence on the sufferance of others and under the perpetual threat of the whip.

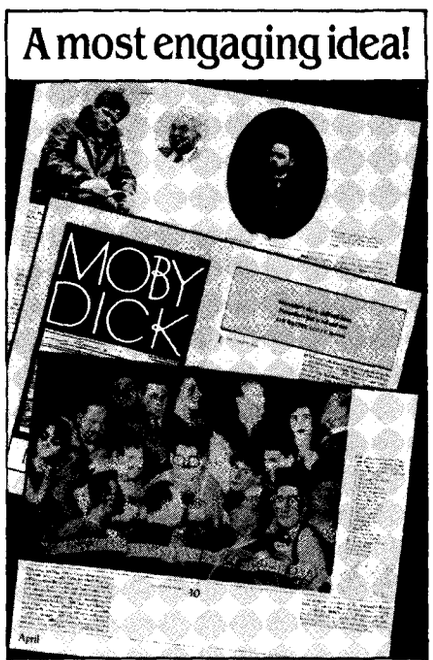
Davis seems to be translating Patterson's essentially existential discussion of slavery into psychoanalytic terms. The stunning epilogue on Hegel and Toussaint L'Ouverture in his second volume had already indicated his interest in slavery as a metaphor for human dependence. Now he appears sufficiently taken with Patterson's idea of slavery as social death to speculate about the consequences for slaves of being uprooted from the normal networks of family and kin that ground the development of personality. In this respect he seems to be edging back toward Stanley Elkins's view of slavery as inflicting pathological damage on the personality of the slave. Davis has never followed Elkins on this matter, and it is hard to believe that he intends to do so now. But he seems trapped in his own reflections on the psychological dimension of slavery. It was one thing to suggest, as he did in that epilogue, that all of us can empathize with the toll that slavery takes on the individual if we are willing to face our own experiences of dependency and powerlessness, our own encounters with lordship and bondage. It is another to imply that the absence of legitimated family and kin relations might undercut the ability of slaves to form independent personalities. The implication that enslavement destroys the foundations of the slave's independent personality is disquieting, however much it is unintended. And it becomes if anything more disquieting when coupled with the suggestion that slaves should be viewed as the "world's first 'modern' people" and slavery itself as the "institutionalization of marginality."

IN THE second part of the book, Davis provides a fresh perspective on the history of abolition in the Western world and here, as in the first part, he uses specific historical examples to illustrate his underlying philosophical and moral concerns. All of Davis's learned and illuminating historical discussions in this part turn on the problematic notion of progress, just as those in the first part turned on the problematic notion of slavery. Every aspect of the abolition movements has been associated with progress. Those who participated in them purportedly sought the progress of humanity; those who benefited from them purportedly reaped the spiritual and material fruits of progress; and even the wrong-headed slaveholders and conservative political leaders who opposed them came to enjoy the rewards of progress in the form of the increased productivity of a free labor force.

The association of emancipation with progress began with the rhetoric of the abolitionists, who laid it all out: they equated their cause with the progress of civilization, which they in turn allied with the triumph of a constellation of values that included human dignity and independence, the dignity and freedom of labor, the increase of social wealth, and more. Free men (and women, although few bothered to mention them explicitly) would be better Christians, better workers, and more efficient contributors to the material progress of society than slaves.

Davis assails this received wisdom on every count. Since freedpeople everywhere in the Western hemisphere had a notorious tendency to slip, so far as conditions permitted, into a subsistence peasantry, and since ex-slaveholders did their best to bind their ex-slaves into new forms of coerced labor, freedpeople lacked both the internal motivation and the external incentives—or even possibilities—to become independent property-holding, industrious, economic men and women. In short, nowhere did emancipation confirm the received wisdom that freedpeople would raise the aggregate productivity of erstwhile slave societies. Emancipation did not lead inexorably to material progress. And as many pro-slavery southerners argued at the time, it did not lead inexorably to improved material conditions for individual ex-slaves.

The history of British abolition, which Davis calls a "deceptive model" for the history of abolition in general, abounds with other ironies. For the abolition first of the slave trade and then of slavery offered the British a unique opportunity



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to impose their power on the world in the name of truth and justice—and progress. Ironically, the bullying in which the British engaged in the name of freedom did not always advance British economic interests in the narrow sense. Yet British antislavery policies did sanction and extend British influence, especially the control of labor supplies. "From the Congress of Vienna to the League of Nations, British statesmen invoked the moral expectations of the British public as a transcendent standard that the rest of the world was obliged to respect." Thus in this respect the British set the tone and pace of world antislavery, even if the North Americans enacted its drama in the very fiber of their society and beliefs.

Davis's argument here is not new, but his preoccupation with it is. For the ambiguous status of emancipation as the midwife of progress leads him to ponder the very relevance of the idea of progress to the thought of the abolitionists themselves. With consummate skill, he demonstrates that although students of the abolitionists have tended to view the abolitionists' ideas as the outgrowth of the rational spirit of the Enlightenment, those ideas were as likely to have derived from evangelical Christianity as from nascent social science; some abolitionists, notably James Cropper, found a marvelous coincidence between the teachings of the Bible and those of *The Wealth of Nations*. In the chapter entitled "Sacred Inspiration and Secular Power," Davis lays out the ideas that, more than any conventional chronology, govern the logic of this second part.

Here Davis reveals his preoccupation with the psychological dynamics that inform people's commitment to social change. Borrowing from Paul Tillich, he distinguishes between two attitudes to such change: *chronos* and *kairos*. Those who endorse the idea of *chronos* manifest essentially secular temperaments and believe in the possibility of "continuous, gradual improvement in accordance with the natural laws of cause and effect." Those who are inclined to embrace *kairos* manifest essentially millenarian temperaments, believe in the necessity for a "decisive moment of qualitative change," and reject the idea "that morality, justice, and happiness are capable of the same cumulative advances as science and technology." Or, to put it simply, the adherents of *chronos* believe in reform, the adherents of *kairos*, in revolution.

This distinction informs Davis's entire discussion of the various abolitionists. He finds the two attitudes warring and supporting each other in different minds and different countries throughout the century. And he is right. But he apparently attaches more significance to the existence of an important dose of millenarianism among the abolitionists than the historical record might warrant. For Davis, the complex motivations of the abolitionists seem to call into question the validity of any idea of progress and, especially, any legitimate standard for progress. If the abolitionists' claims to advance the spiritual and material progress of humanity in accordance with the self-evident dictates of natural law (itself a precocious version of social theory, if not social science) actually rested on an emotional commitment to the radical transformation of the world-as-it-is, how do we trust theirs, ours, or anybody's professions of rationally serving the objective progress of humanity? Davis's picture of abolition offers us a world in which people did not intend what they effected and did not effect what they intended, a world in which crusades for progress and against barbarism resulted in stagnation, retrogression, and the reemergence of the violent dominion of some over others.

SO WHAT does he leave us with? He offers us an assessment of slavery that emphasizes the ubiquity not merely of the will to domination, but the forms of both physical and psychological domination. He offers us an account of abolition that stresses the contradictory motivations of even the most determined crusaders for justice and the contradictory results of even the most successful revolutions. And he concludes with a sober, if not bleak, vision of our contemporary world. Davis clearly believes that the general problems that were concretely embodied in the enslavement of Africans and the struggle for their emancipation are with us yet. He perceptively suggests that the concern

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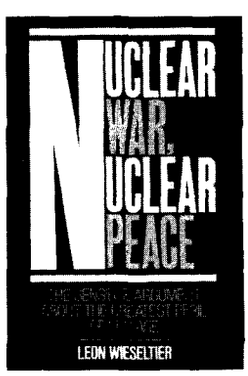

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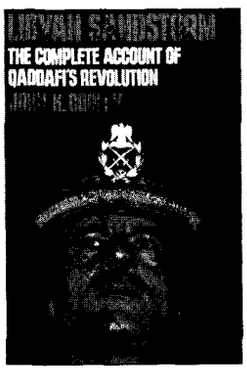

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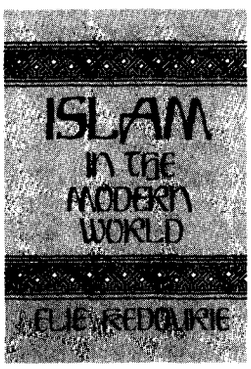

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with the abolition of slavery has merged into the campaign for the defense of human rights. He does not actually say that the United States has picked up Britain's mantle as the apostle of a progress that appears to conform closely to its own national state and economic interests, but he more explicitly makes the connection in the case of the Soviet Union, the forced labor of which he finds chillingly reminiscent of slavery.

In these judgments he is, however, falling into the same kinds of traps he says his abolitionists do by letting his historical analogies run away from him. Analogies constitute one of the principal vehicles of that historical instruction to which Davis is committed. But they can only shed real light on political and moral choices if they are recognized as pointing toward similarities between phenomena that are themselves recognized as essentially different. Analogy calls attention to similarity, not identity.

For if the similarities appear decisive from one perspective, from another the differences overshadow them. The vantage point from which all slavery seems more or less interchangeable—an existential condition, a psychological burden—is a subjective one. In contrast, any discussion of progress, however self-serving, reaches toward greater objectivity, toward a standard that permits responsible judgment and comparison. Any serious history requires both viewpoints. The question is the balance or, to borrow one of Davis's favorite expressions, the dialectical tension between the two. In this work Davis seems to be leaning more than has been his wont toward the subjective standpoint. At least he staunchly refuses to endorse the self-satisfaction and complacency of the more unqualified claims of progress, including that arrogance of the human spirit which claims to have subjected human woe and wickedness to its own enlightened policies and superior scientific knowledge.

But just when we are about to think that he is relegating the abolition of slavery to the same category of deception to which he has relegated any purported progress in our ability to understand the miseries that humans inflict on each other, he steps back from his own skepticism to write that "from the distance of the late-twentieth century . . . the progress of emancipation from the 1780s to the 1880s is one of the most extraordinary events in history." And he concludes with the recognition that "the absolute ownership of one person by another has become as rare as Wilberforce, Buxton, or Garrison could ever have hoped." This imperceptible progress, he avers, "is what generations of abolitionists would have applauded as 'human progress.' " And, whatever the woes that press upon us, should not we as well?

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, professor of history at SUNY Binghamton, is a Fellow of the National Humanities Center this year. She has recently published a translation and edition of *The Autobiography of Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours* and, with Eugene D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital* (Oxford University Press).

COMING UP FOR EIRE

Secrets and Other Stories by Bernard MacLaverty

(Viking, 130 pp., $13.95)

There used to be a magazine advertisement—for electricity, or some such thing—that showed a cross section of a house with every room occupied, every family member involved in his or her separate activity. The mother was cooking, the father was showering, the daughter was dressing for a date, and so on, each apparently oblivious to the others. It was an oddly satisfying experience. At last, you felt, you'd got the whole picture. That ad gave the observer a fleeting illusion of omniscience.

Bernard MacLaverty's *Secrets* offers the same illusion. In these fifteen stories, priests and chimney sweeps and town drunks and schoolboys busily go about their lives in the cluttered, sprawling house that is Ireland. You have only the briefest glimpse of them, but their lives are so skillfully cross-sectioned that you feel you've been granted privileged information.

In "The Exercise," a young boy asks his father for help with his Latin. The father is a barman who—so family legend goes—could have done wonders if only he'd been able to continue his education; and when the answers he provides turn out to be wrong, the boy teeters on the edge of doubt. Then he rights himself and puts the incident out of his mind. What makes the story so effective is the implied ending that lies just beyond the actual ending—that moment not too far in the future when, faced with another such incident, the son will have to admit the truth to himself.

IN THE title story, a young man is visiting the deathbed of an aunt who has never forgiven him for reading a packet of her letters when he was a child. He is the only one who knows the secret in the letters, which is that the man she loved sacrificed their future together and joined a monastery after witnessing the horrors of war. Here again, there is something unsaid that gives the story its resonance: however wrong the nephew was to have invaded her privacy, he did her a strange kind of service. After she dies he alone carried her secret, and he alone realizes its value. His mother, on the other hand, tosses the dead woman's letters into the fire without a thought.

We have the same sense of personal weight in "Hugo," a story about a boy who, as sole reader of a would-be writer's manuscript, points out as kindly as possible that it is not good work. The would-be writer grows steadily shabbier and less hopeful, and eventually he commits suicide. As in all stories that respect reality, there is no villain here, no pure black or white; there's not a hint that the boy should have done anything different when presented with such a manuscript. This is the way the world simply *is*, MacLaverty seems to be saying: each of us bears some burden of unavoidable guilt.

A few of the stories are much lighter—quick, amusing slices of Irish life. "A Rat and Some Renovations" describes a family's flurry to modernize the kitchen before a visit from American

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relatives. A schoolboy in "The Miraculous Candidate" prays with such fervor to the patron saint of examinations that he actually levitates in the classroom—an experience he views as more of a nuisance than a miracle. And in "A Happy Birthday," a man drinks himself into such a state that when he takes a ride in something called a Hurricane Waltzer, he ends up vomiting onto the entire crowd below. This may strike you as funny or not, depending on how strong your stomach is—I found it a bit too graphic—but the story is a good sample of Bernard MacLaverty's style, which is so apt and vivid and unstudied that you're not so much reading it as seeing it pass before you. Or feeling it, as in this description of the drinker after his visit to the pub:

> When Sammy came out the bright sunlight was a great shock to him. As he walked along the street the walls seemed to come at him and nudge him. People deliberately went out of their way to veer into his path. The bus driver smiled at him for no reason and some young ones clapped after he had sung a song.

There are trite moments here and there, but they are saved by the stories' atmospheres—the richness of texture that comes across as truthfulness. A woman assures a visiting priest that she employs only the rhythm method of birth control, and then not half a page later one of her children announces (much more forthrightly than would a real-life child) that he's been playing with "Mammy's clock with the tablets in." We wince at the contrivance but forgive it, for it occurs in the middle of a story so teeming with household disarray and fretful children that it seems downright noisy.

For the same reason we forgive the entire plot of "Between Two Shores"—a piece in which the husband wonders whether to infect his wife with venereal disease or confess the truth to her—because of its convincing evocation of a long, edgy, restless night on the boat between England and Ireland. Partway through this story an unidentified stranger spreads a sleeping bag on the deck and slides into it. By the end, after we've spent all those wakeful hours on the boat, we envy that stranger as deeply as the central character does.

A boy who has watched his father shave draws a finger through the whiskers in the sink after the father's departure. It's a gesture that implies admiration and affection, and part of Bernard MacLaverty's gift is that he trusts us to realize that; he doesn't overexplain. A Catholic woman married to a non-Catholic, caught in the rush of family life and less and less attentive to her religion, scoops up a priest's gift of holy medals "almost too light for metal" in the same kind of movement that her husband uses to rake in the chips when he's playing poker. This woman, visiting the slum that her husband is helping to demolish, is ashamed to look at the wallpaper that the bulldozers have exposed—"pink rosebuds, scorned in her own family, faded flowers, patterns modern a generation ago. She felt it was too private." In that single moment, she's won us.

American readers will probably think of Bernard MacLaverty as a novelist, if they've heard of him at all. Certainly it's in novels that he shows his greatest strength—particularly in *Cal*, which was a powerful book about what it feels like to live squarely in the middle of Ireland's current troubles. *Cal* ended on a sharp downward note that kept the book hanging on in the reader's mind. Although *Secrets* is only now being published in this country, it is earlier work and it lacks the novels' depth and range. But it does give a taste of what Bernard MacLaverty has to offer—a cutaway view of a fascinating particle of the world.

ANNE TYLER

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

1982 Janine by Alasdair Gray (Viking). The desperate, diverting confessions of a sexually obsessed Scotchman. (Reviewed 11/12/84)

The Nature of the Child by Jerome Kagan (Basic Books). A challenging look at the family and its influence. (11/5/84)

The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War by George Kennan (Pantheon). A grim scholarly study of political and military shortsightedness. (11/5/84)

Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control by Strobe Talbott (Knopf). A masterful account of arms control policymaking since 1981. (10/15/84)

The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation by Joel Williamson (Oxford University Press). A full-scale reconsideration of black-white relations in American history. (10/15/84)

The New Politics of Inequality by Thomas Byrne Edsall (Norton). A brilliant analysis of class, ideology, and money in politics. (10/29/84)

Solzhenitsyn: A Biography by Michael Scammell (Norton). A bold, balanced portrait of the man some hail as prophet, others denounce as fanatic. (10/15/84)

The War of the End of the World: by Mario Vargas Llosa (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). An apocalyptic vision from Peru's most important novelist. (10/8/84)

Stranger on the Square by Arthur and Cynthia Koestler (Random House). The posthumously published journals of one of the century's major intellectuals and his wife. (10/8/84)

Season of Spoils: The Story of the Reagan Administration's Attack on the Environment by Jonathan Lash, with Katherine Gillman and David Sheridan (Pantheon). A timely and persuasive account of a ruinous record. (10/1/84)

CORRECTION

Due to a typographical error, a sentence in Anthony Storr's review of Jerome Kagan's *The Nature of the Child* (TNR, Nov. 5, 1984) was garbled. It should have read: "What emerges most forcefully from the evidence adduced by Kagan is that, hitherto, psychologists and psychiatrists have given too much weight to the supposed permanent effects of very early experience, and too little weight to the power of later life events to mold and alter the individual."

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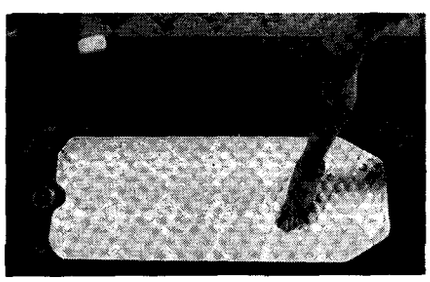

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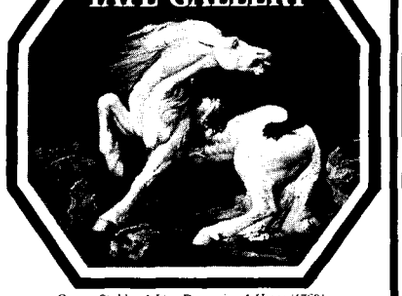

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

unable to protect American trade, and thus meshed with the agrarian and pacifistic tendencies of Mr. Jefferson's party.

Despite the seizures of American merchant vessels and seamen and Jefferson's own belief that the "opinion in Europe [is] that our government is entirely in Quaker principles," Jefferson's response to aggression was to embargo *American* foreign trade.

FREDERICK C. LEINER
Charlottesville, Virginia

TRB, *from page 6*

Third, a concern that has gotten little attention so far: interest payments on the debt are a massive transfer, on balance, from the poor to the rich. By increasing demand for capital, the debt increases interest rates, which are the price of capital. In an economic pie of any given size, a bigger share for capital means a smaller share for labor. The typical federal bondholder is clearly better off than the typical federal taxpayer. As interest payments grow to overwhelm other items in the budget, their upward redistributional effect could overwhelm the downward redistributional effect of federal programs such as welfare and Social Security. When combined with Reagan's changes on the revenue side (on balance, a tax increase for the working poor and a tax cut for the affluent), this leaves the government looking like a reverse Robin Hood.

In fiscal 1984, 37 percent of the revenues from the personal income tax ($111 billion out of $302 billion) went to pay interest on the debt. According to C.B.O. figures, this will rise to 42 percent in 1989. In places like Argentina, there is a strong populist sentiment that asks why the citizenry must suffer austerity in order to keep up the payments to rich American bondholders. There is great pressure on politicians to simply repudiate the debt. By 1989, especially if there is a bout of bad times, there may be sentiment in America itself asking the same question, if not proposing the same solution.

The conservative economist Herbert Stein pointed out several months ago in *The Wall Street Journal* that America *has*, in effect, repudiated most of its national debt. The federal debt at the end of World War II was $242 billion. In 1946 dollars, it is now almost exactly the same, even though we have run up a cumulative deficit of $800 billion in the interim. The magic elixir, of course, was inflation. We eroded the value of our debts faster than we ran up new ones. Inflation, more than economic growth, is why the debt is now a smaller part of the GNP than in the postwar decades. (The biggest losers were the patriotic suckers who bought U.S. Savings Bonds at laughably low interest rates.)

Already you can detect the beginnings of an unholy alliance between the radical right and the radical left to urge this trick again. The nutty supply-siders want Paul Volcker and the Federal Reserve to get President Reagan off the hook by expanding the money supply to accommodate his deficits. Self-styled populists of the left have a long history of supporting currency erosion as a panacea.

Unfortunately, inflation is not merely immoral and poisonous to prosperity. As a solution to the debt problem, it is a sleight of hand that can't be tried successfully more than once in a generation. People catch on. In order for the trick to work, inflation must be higher than the interest rate the government is paying on its debts. Otherwise, the debt compounds faster than it loses value. The government is currently paying an average interest rate of over 10 percent, so it would take double-digit inflation to even begin eroding the debt.

What's more, almost half the federal debt comes due and is refinanced every year. Once burned, twice shy. The slightest sign that the government was moving again toward back-door repudiation would send interest rates way up, starting a game of leapfrog that would quickly make our economy look like Israel's.

The only real solution, obviously, is to start pruning the annual deficit by cutting spending and increasing taxes. The one thing you can't prune immediately, though, is those very interest payments. And, according to *National Journal*, since interest payments are growing automatically, it will take $20 billion a year of pruning in other areas just to keep the deficit stable.

Congratulations on your victory, Mr. President. Have a nice term.

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OXFORD DIARIST

Against the Motion

AT THE INVITATION of the Oxford Union, I've come all the way to England to debate the proposition, "Israeli intransigence is the chief obstacle to Middle East peace." I am not arguing the affirmative. The truth is, I'm a bit afraid to argue at all; I've never debated formally, certainly not against and among the notoriously fluent English. And the Union itself is not unintimidating. In its 161 years five Prime Ministers have been its president—Salisbury, Gladstone, Asquith, Macmillan, and Heath. Fifty years ago, this House, so-called, voted overwhelmingly that it would "in no circumstances fight for its King and its Country." A place with historic resonance, then, but not one in which reason and good sense invariably prevail.

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES have not, in recent years, been especially friendly to the Zionist case. In some of the more provincial "redbricks," in fact, Jewish student societies and Israeli speakers have actually been banned from campus. At the Oxford Union, the last debate on the Arab-Israeli dispute two years ago was lost, and badly, by what I will presume to call "our" side. I expect not to fare much better myself, and agreed to go only when friends pointed out that since defeat was already assumed, a poor showing would not further undermine the ramparts of Jerusalem. And a three-hour conversation the day before the debate with Sir Isaiah Berlin encourages me to think that we might actually win, not because he says so but because he offers me so many wise observations with which to arm myself.

IN THE UNION'S old wood-paneled meeting room, the speakers speak from a "dispatch box," exactly like the one in the House of Commons. On the affirmative bench sit two undergraduates; Faisal Aouidha, head of the P.L.O.'s London office; and Lord Christopher Mayhew, a former president of the Union who was Ernest Bevin's Undersecretary when Bevin, as postwar Foreign Minister, was frantically trying to prevent the immigration of Jewish refugees to Palestine and avert the establishment of Israel. Mayhew has been at the anti-Israel podium ever since. On the opposition bench sit two more undergraduates, a former Labour M.P. named Eric Moonman, and me. The hall is full. I look for recognizable faces and spot a few former NEW REPUBLIC interns and some former students of mine from Harvard, now studying here. The current president of the Oxford Union, Laurence Grafstein, a Rhodes Scholar from Canada, is both a former student and a former TNR intern. Later in the proceedings he will leave the chair to make an unusual intervention from the floor. Eloquently evoking the last Union debate on Israel, he reminds the audience that Dr. Issam Sartawi, also a P.L.O. representative, had won the evening by seeming to offer at last some recognition of the Jewish State, only to be murdered not long afterward by a P.L.O. faction for precisely such a heresy—one in the long list of Arabs to find moderation dangerous to health.

LORD MAYHEW'S FACE is at once weak and haughty; so is his demeanor. Nothing he says shows any genuine sympathy for the Palestinians. If he had such sympathy he wouldn't be giving them the kind of reckless counsel that has been his signature. He is one of those Middle East specialists whose preference for the Arabs seems to originate in, or is at least reinforced by, a dislike of Jews. But the crucial moment of the debate comes when Aouidha, the P.L.O. man, rises to speak. Within a minute of his opening, amidst the usual "we are all Semites" rubbish, he has compared the Israelis to the Nazis; with this grotesque comparison, he begins to lose the audience. Then, in short order and without regard to truth or tactics, he charges that Sartawi had been killed not by some Palestinian ultras but by—you guessed it—the Israelis, who had also contrived the Sabra and Shatila massacres. He didn't seem to care whether he persuaded the audience; he just wanted to make sure he said nothing that would land him on a mortuary slab like his predecessor, Dr. Sartawi. Who knows what Aouidha's real views are? Maybe in his heart of hearts he is a dove's dove. But does it matter? In the world of Palestinian politics the final arbiter is the terrorist. In Aouidha's words was all the evidence anybody needed to have.

THE VOTE, with some 600 people tallied, was more than three to one against the motion. This was not simply because of the eloquence on the opposition bench, though there was some of that, certainly from Grafstein and from the two other student speakers, neither of them Jews: an Australian named Michael Reenie and a young Brit named Boris Johnson, both articulate, witty, stylish, knowledgeable, humane. How did they come by their views? Both had spent time in Israel and the territories; both had therefore seen how egregiously false the conventional Arab description of Arab life under Israeli rule is. To this they testified persuasively at the Union. But the Palestinian case against Israel has lost its standing with these young people, as with by now the broader political culture in the West, not because there is no Palestinian tragedy. There is. The real and ongoing Palestinian tragedy lies in the refusal of the Palestinian leadership to countenance any compromise that offers some realistic promise of redress and redemption. Insisting still on getting everything, the leadership will get nothing. The Camp David agreements of 1979 invited the Palestinians in the territories to join with the Israelis (and the Jordanians and the Egyptians) in negotiating an autonomy agreement. Autonomy is not sovereignty, but it is not nothing. By now the five-year interim envisioned as the autonomy period would have been over and negotiations would be under way for an ultimate settlement: an enhancement of autonomy, federation, some condominium arrangement, perhaps even a version of independence. But the Palestinians let this opportunity for compromise pass, as they have let every single opportunity for compromise pass ever since the Peel Commission of 1937 proposed a tiny Jewish statelet hugging the Mediterranean from Tel Aviv to Haifa. This was my speech; it is also the truth. It is why we won. Public opinion has finally caught on, not only in Europe and in Britain but at home too. So the liberationist slogans of the Palestinians, always tragic and implausible, are now simply boring.

M.P.

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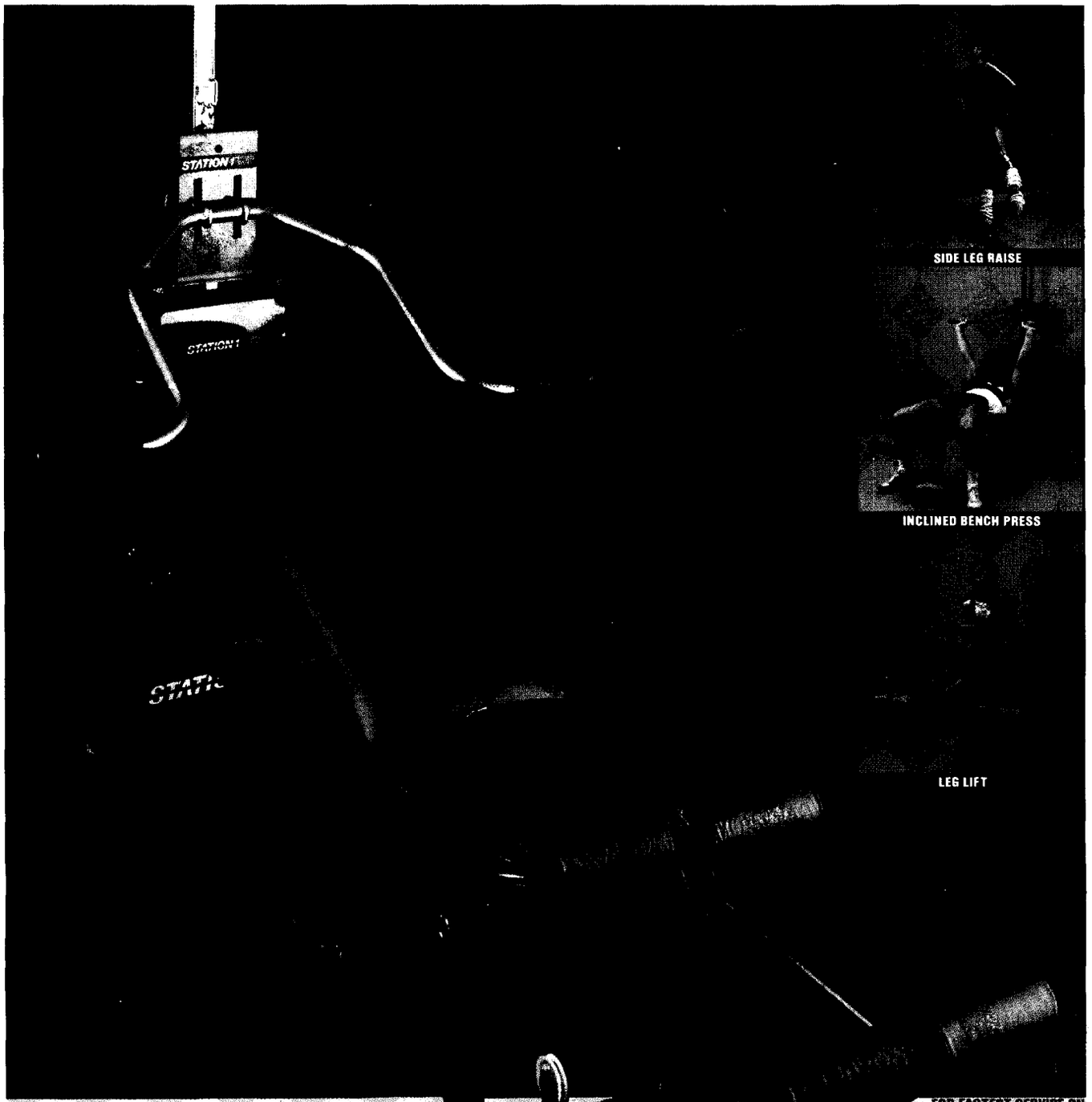

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